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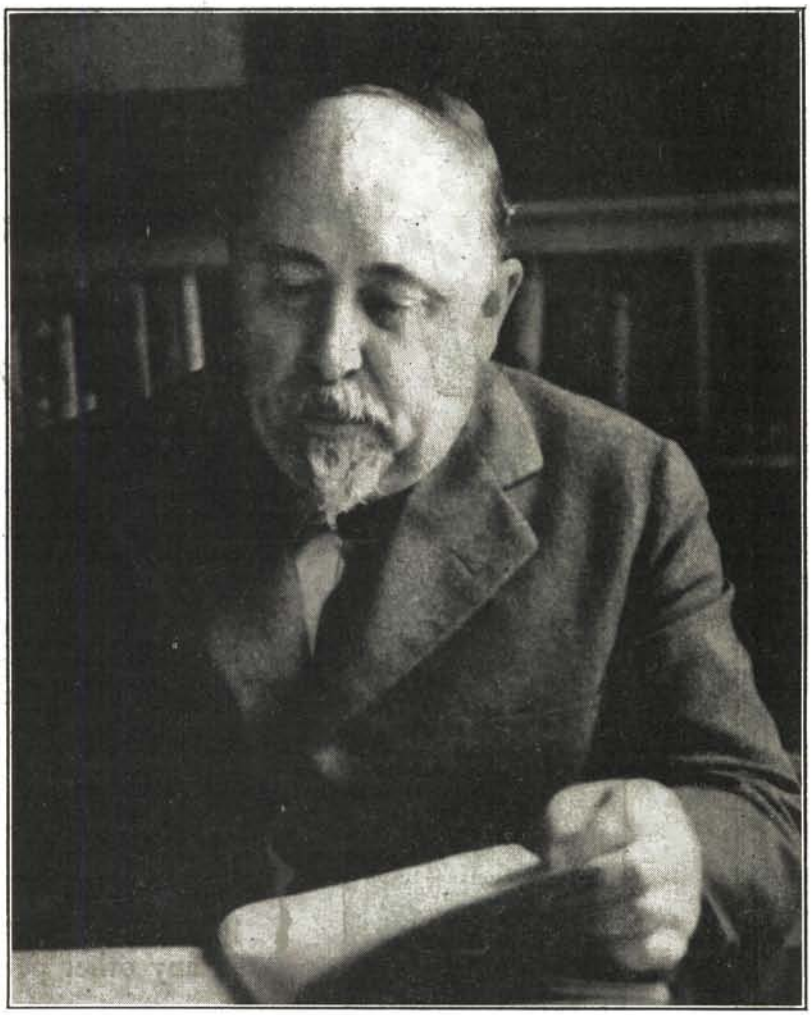

ELLIOT PAUL

"By spending his precious memories so lavishly and so well, by recreating the old life of Santa Eulalia, that island backwater caught in the lethal wash of the Spanish civil war, Elliot Paul has made the war real to all who care to read him. It is a great achievement." . . .

(See page 5)

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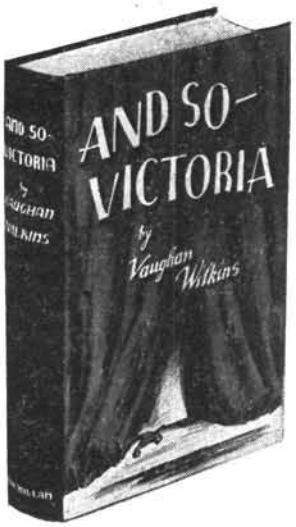
One Year Ago . . . *we nominated* **GONE WITH THE WIND**
"The Outstanding Book of 1936"

Today . . . *we nominate as the Foremost Candidate for The Honors of 1937—*

AND SO— VICTORIA

By Vaughan Wilkins



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Portrait of the Artist as a Proletarian

BY ALAN CALMER

BY this time so many American writers have enlisted in the cultural movement of the left that it is hard to draw even a rough sketch of the proletarian *homme de lettres,* model 1937. He is something like a composite of three generations, thirty schools, and three hundred ways of writing. Nevertheless, a simon-pure species does exist, one largely untainted by older esthetic strains. It can be found among a cluster of young authors belonging to the latest generation, who entered the literary scene during the nineteen-thirties. Although their initial achievements have been rather slight, their trials are worth reporting because they best reveal the problems of the proletarian artist from the inside. The following is largely their collective portrait, but also includes sidelights of other revolutionary groupings, in so far as they illuminate the nature of this literary phenomenon. The young proletarian belongs, of course, to the depression generation. He came of age just in time to catch a glimpse of retreating prosperity. Born into a lower middle-class family, the texture of his early life was more like Floyd Dell's mooncalf than like the well-to-do young men who populate Scott Fitzgerald's novels. He was almost entirely shut off from cultural currents. Usually he stumbled upon literature by accident. He was attracted to it as an alleyway of escape from the commonplace pressures of his daily life. It became for him also an assertion of superiority over his stupid environment.

TWO PROLETARIAN NOVELISTS
Edward Newhouse and Clara Weatherwax.

So far the pattern is easily recognizable: it is the life of the bohemian all over again. But here the crisis altered the whole scheme of things. It seemed to eliminate at one stroke every chance for success or sinecure. What it did was put very concisely by a member of the new generation: "Opportunities for cashing in are gone, and we have no illusions about their return. . . . Our economic experiences have stripped us of waverings, of side-glances toward prosperous avenues."

Just out of his teens when the economic storm broke, our young protagonist was driven toward the only refuge in view. The communist movement had launched its unique offensive on the "cultural front" at almost exactly the right instant, just as lightning struck Wall Street. This cultural campaign revolved around a modernized type of Thanatopsis club, established in leading cities. Known as John Reed Clubs, these organizations, like most literary societies, consisted of a minority of young men of letters and a majority of frustrated authors and amateur intellectuals. But these institutions were not merely reading or discussion circles; their forms of work were decidedly new. Creative talent was drafted to compose leaflets for open air meetings, to edit mimeographed papers, to improvise skits for mass rallies, to write group chants against capitalism, to lecture on art and propaganda, poetry and revolution, intellectuals and the crisis.

TWO PROLETARIAN POETS
Muriel Rukeyser and Kenneth Patchen.

The young author of the depression period got his first notions about proletarian letters from the leftwing "pioneers" who edited *The New Masses.* Echoing their strictures, he was forever chiding liberal intellectuals who attended John Reed Club lectures, urging them to abandon their ivory towers and hitch their cultural talent to the proletarian star.

All the theories and debates of this early stage can be summed up in two slogans, "Art is propaganda" and "Literature is a weapon," which were conceived in a rigid, utilitarian manner. One became so adept at handling these concepts that it was easy to prove how political reaction lurked behind the purest love sonnet, or to demonstrate that the most forceful story of a lynching was "defeatist" because it did not show the "way out."

The young mooncalf plunged deep into this new politico-cultural territory; but it did not resolve the sharp conflict between his environment and himself. To be sure, the John Reed Clubs did create something of an intellectual center, a restricted milieu in which he could voice his esthetic desires and judgments. Certainly the unprecedented emphasis which was placed upon the experiential value of culture brought art closer to the market place and the market place closer to art. But in many ways his social maladjustment was intensified. It was true that Marxism was lifting the cultural face of American laymen who ventured within the bounds of its influence; it aroused in them some appreciation for artistic values. However, they grasped these values—and were encouraged to comprehend them—chiefly in terms of an immediate utility. This practical stress which the everyday needs of the labor movement imposed upon the arts, plus the strident appeals of *The New Masses* for a pugnacious culture, harmfully affected the literary striving of the period. Very little of it is likely to be remembered; and some of the blame must go to the niggardly view of art which prevailed.

Soon the youthful proletarian began to publish his own little magazines. The prevalent type of short story which he received was the tale of conversion. For years it was the reigning fiction model. Such narratives usually followed a formula something like this: they told how an unemployed person sinks down to the

Next Week

LENA
By ROGER VERCEL
Reviewed by Basil Davenport

SMALL TALK
By HAROLD NICOLSON
Reviewed by George Dangerfield

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lowest depths of misery until, a few lines or paragraphs before the end, he witnesses a street meeting, suddenly sees the light and jumps at the head of the procession —just in time to meet the rush of the cops. Tales of this kind were generally political testaments, conceived and written in the first flush of excitement with which their authors embraced the revolution.

In spite of these extravaganzas, the young proletarian was taught two invaluable lessons: to look for his material in central social experience and to be concerned profoundly about reaching a mass audience. As a matter of fact, this is the positive contribution of proletarianism to American fiction: it has helped in no small degree to swing the latter away from hardboiled "objectivism" on the one side and incommunicable subjectivism on the other, to the traditional center-of-the-road of enduring literature.

If the conversion ending was the sovereign style in fiction, the preferred poetic theme was some current episode in the class battle. In elegy, ode, and litany, the young proletarian hailed labor's triumphs or lamented its temporary defeats. Many of these renderings were merely transcriptions of newspaper items; some achieved artistic contour. Out of this kind of external, depersonalized composition, a minor body of verse, dealing chiefly with the struggles of the working class abroad rather than on the native scene, was created.

While the young proletarian learned to find poetry in abstract political subjects, his experiment at best was a *tour de force*, rarely springing from the bottom of his consciousness. But gradually, in the vaguest way, he began to sense the limitations of this sort of writing. Almost imperceptibly a change took place, and was reflected in a mounting fatigue, and later distrust, for wooden action and platitudinous sermonizing, for twisted wish-fulfillment masquerading as literature. The young revolutionary author was groping his way uncertainly toward his own personal experience instead of echoing a political "line." This does not mean that he threw his proletarian ideology overboard. His awareness—at least in some cases—merged into his sensibility, so that his depiction of the most private feelings imaged, directly or remotely, his public philosophy. Before long this became a conscious direction and was defined as a movement away from "leftism": by this was meant the zealous effort to squeeze imaginative writing into the lean compartment of an immediate political program, an operation which served only to drain literature of its complexity and its singular attributes.

This new tendency, reflected in poetry, fiction, and criticism, constituted a reaction to what had become recognized as the official brand of proletarian literature. Soon the protest was directed not only against old practices but old practitioners. This revolt was inherent from the very start. The training of the hardy pioneers of revolutionary letters—Michael Gold, Joseph Freeman, and others—was opposed to the underlying literary aims of the young generation. Blazing new trails all by themselves during the nineteen twenties, these backwoodsmen had gone through an unusual kind of schooling. Dividing their hours between imaginative writing and daily agitation, what they wrote was largely neither literature nor political science and often not even sound Marxist journalism. Because of their anomalous position, they were totally out of sympathy with the expatriates and other authors of their generation; they did not really fit into the literary mores of their time.

If they belonged to any esthetic tradition, it was to a variety of romanticism —imbibed from Max Eastman and Floyd Dell who edited the *Masses-Liberator*— which had occupied a secondary place in American culture just before and after the World War but soon became hopelessly outmoded. The hardy pioneers were incurable romantics at a time when their contemporaries were addicted to the hardboiled and wasteland manners.

As soon as the depression swept so many men and women of letters toward the communist movement, the whole set-up was transformed. Repudiating his "leftist" ancestors, the young proletarian found a closer identity of purpose with poets like Horace Gregory and Archibald MacLeish and the British triumvirate; and with a group who might be called the intermediate or transition novelists of the left, whose first volumes mirrored the attitudes of the late twenties but whose outlook then merged into a revolutionary affirmation.

These authors—they include Josephine Herbst, Robert Cantwell, James T. Farrell, Erskine Caldwell, and others—got just close enough, esthetically, to the movement of the left to be warmed without being roasted by the fires of communism. They have grown in stature through the stress upon pivotal experience and social vision which Marxism has taught them; this is apparent in the contrast between their earliest and latest books.

Their esthetic journey toward the revolution has been less hazardous than the pilgrimage of some of their contemporaries. The latter tried to leap across the chasm separating their early attitudes from their new convictions, a violent act which served only to mutilate their sensibilities. Desiring to become impeccable revolutionists overnight, they wrote didactic odes to the *Daily Worker*, distorted dramas of workmen on the march, and stilted essays which evaluated literary works according to a political immediacy.

In alliance with the pioneers, these recruits—the best known are Granville Hicks and Isidor Schneider—commanded the strategic avenues of literary opinion on the left. Upon the indulgences of an earlier period, they heaped new offenses. Even when, in theory, they disavowed or partly denied the most flagrant tendencies of the past, in practice, in the judgment of specific volumes, they did not overhaul their old habits. Quite the most obnoxious of these was the blind worship of a hypothetical worker, endowed with the cheapest cultural traits of the American layman, whose intellectual prejudices, shaped by movie, radio, tabloid,

(*Continued on page* 14)

Conditions Contrary to Fact

BY FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

After Eugene Field's "If I Were Francis Dibdin . . ."

IF I were Walter Lippmann and Walter Lippmann I,
All muddy mental waters I'd quickly clarify;
He'd hesitate, and wonder what the world was all about,
And I would never be a prey to misery and doubt.
He'd never say, "It seems to me this is a bit too long,"
And I would never build a rhyme, or sing a simple song.
To quip and comicality I'd gladly say good-bye,
If I were Walter Lippmann and Walter Lippmann I.

If I were Franklin Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt I,
He'd be a Caspar Milquetoast, and diffident and shy;
I would be full of confidence and courage in my course,
While trepidation would be his at any hint of force.
The nation all would be My Friends, and everyone I'd know;
He'd have gigantic ignorance, with the universe his foe.
I'd be a busy beaver, and he a butterfly—
If I were Franklin Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt I.

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The Men Behind the Guns

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A SPANISH TOWN. By Elliot Paul. New York: Random House. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THIS book is a chapter in the history of the most horrible of civil wars. It has been written with profound emotion, and it communicates emotion. It has been written with understanding, and it conveys understanding. I do not think that Mr. Paul would like to have it called his best book, to have it compared with mere jobs of writing, because this is the kind of book that a man can write only once, regarding which comparisons are meaningless. Even the most case-hardened of reviewers is not tempted to criticize it as literature: one can think of it only as an experience shared, and be grateful to the author for his sharing.

For five years Elliot Paul was a figure and an active participant in the life of the little town of Santa Eulalia, that lies on the southern coast of the island of Ibiza, in the Balearic group, flanked by Spain and Africa and Sardinia. During five years he learned to love the friendly ways and easy daily rhythms of the Ibicencos; sentimentally and sensitively he identified himself with the island folk—they were his people and their land was his land. And after five years, in 1936, he saw civil war come creeping like a wave of poison gas from the Spanish peninsula, he saw his beloved centuries-old rhythms irreparably broken, he saw friendship murdered, and he saw his friends die. Or, at least, he saw them begin to die, for after the first fascist coup on Ibiza, and the first loyalist counter-stroke, he was compelled to flee the island. So he did not see the worst. But he records it in a postscript: "According to Associated Press reports issued the next day, the Italian and rebel troops, who arrived within a few hours after I was taken off on *Die Falke,* herded four hundred Republicans, among whom must have been most of the male characters in this book, and killed them with machine guns through the small Moorish windows."

"Most of the male characters in this book. . . ." That is a significant and poignant phrase for readers of the book. For Elliot Paul has made those men known to us, as though we, like himself, had lived for years among them. Fishermen and storekeepers and café owners, mechanics and farmers and artisans—we can call them by name, and ask this one after his ailing child, shake our heads over that one's problems, and smile at another's folly. Thanks to a man who can catch life itself in a net of words, we have shared their daily casual toil, we have laughed with them, drunk deep with them, and with them we have pounded out native songs that kept island echoes stirring through the night. We know those others, too—rich landowners, priests, and officials, and members of the Guardia Civil; they were friends once, but we have seen brother draw away from brother and fratricide begin. And newspaper headlines and news stories and statistics are not real for those who know nothing of the people whom they concern; but when you know the names and natures of the men who are referred to as so many Catalans, so many Basques, or so many Ibicencos—when you know even a few of the human units that are lumped together to make up the impersonal statistics, then those statistics and those headlines and those stories are real indeed. Through them emerge the figures of Sindik the carpenter and Juan his son, and Guillermo the blacksmith, and Pedro the waiter, and Captain Juan, and Bonéd the fascist, and ex-Captain Nicolau, and Toni Ferrer, and Primitivo; the serene or bewildered faces of their women-folk; and the once laughing faces of all those *jeunes filles en fleur,* whose blooming coincided with the catastrophic death of the world into which they had been born to live and laugh and love. . . . Yes, by spending his precious memories so lavishly and so well, by recreating the old life of Santa Eulalia, that island backwater caught in the lethal wash of the Spanish civil war, Elliot Paul has made the war real to all who care to read him. It is a great achievement.

He has recreated the old life, and he has told of the coming of the new death, as he saw it. Political rumblings on the peninsula; Ibiza cut off from communication with the mainland; seizure of the island by the fascists; republicans in hiding; loyalist troops recovering Ibiza for the government; fascist bombers, murdering women and children; republicans retaliating by the massacre of prisoners . . . bloody stroke and counter-stroke, and to what distant, unforeseen end?

Elliot Paul has written history as it unfolded itself in microcosm among a simple island folk innocent of political maneuvering and unlearned in political philosophy. Would books have better informed their judgment and guided them more surely? "I can only be sure of this," he declares. "That if the rich men in the United States had bought out the army and the police with foreign money, turned loose the Indians with guns and driven the people's government from Washington, Ferrer in Ibiza would have understood the situation better than literate Americans seem to understand affairs in Spain right now."

" 'It will be two hundred years before people here will be friendly again,' said Pedro at the Royalty, sadly."

For the moment, Pedro's is the last word. For how many moments?

ELLIOT PAUL BETWEEN TWO OF HIS ISLAND FRIENDS
From a painting by Mary Hoover.

Mad, Bad Hanovers

AND SO—VICTORIA. By Vaughan Wilkins. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

HAVE we achieved something of a complete cycle in our fiction fashions of late? Certainly the writers of our most phenomenal successes in recent seasons have displayed a tendency to stay on the high-road of their Victorian predecessors, abandoning attempts to break new paths. Both Mr. Allen and Miss Mitchell gave us historical romances Victorian in fullness of plot and

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elaboration of detail, using realism sparingly, and prolonged personal analysis hardly at all. While this formula seems unlikely to provide much in the way of new literary milestones, at least it should yield us an ample supply of intelligently conceived reading matter which is perfectly designed to strike the taste of the times.

Now a new British writer pays his tribute to this return to narrative normalcy. His book is a panorama of Regency and pre-Victorian England, a full and exciting tale based on the adventures of one of the innumerable Hanoverian bastards, a grandchild of George III. There is a little of everything in the often fascinating story of Christopher Harnish, which begins by involving the boy unwittingly in a murderous plot against the infant Princess Victoria. Historians and novelists, perhaps consenting to the malformation of truth for patriotic reasons, have passed lightly over the machinations of Victoria's "wicked uncle," Ernest of Cumberland. Mr. Wilkins does an excellent job in reviving his ogre-like figure. But the author employs sentiment as well as action. The chapters of modernized Dickensian protest against the nineteenth century's treatment of children are among the best things in the book, brutal and graphic in their description of Christopher's horrible cross-country trip with a band of miserable girls and boys purchased from orphanages or poverty-stricken parents, and destined to become chimney-sweeps or worse. Then the *cause célèbre* of the period is recalled by the introduction of the unhappy consort of George IV, foolish Caroline of Brunswick. Next romance is given its head for a time as Christopher grows up, then melodrama and gunplay dominate, until at last he is respectably united to his Margaret Atchill, as Cumberland is foiled and the Victorian reign of decorum begins in an England weary of the mad, bad Hanoverians.

If the later sections of the book never quite equal the opening, in which the juicily corrupt Regency spirit is unforgettably caught, Mr. Wilkins has none the less managed to write a long narrative that seldom falters. Somehow the complications of the plot, though far from easy to follow, do not seem to get in the reader's way. Scene follows scene with the greatest of ease; as one episode ends, the author's almost alarming powers of invention promptly supply another, drawn from an apparently limitless store of plausible and colorful semi-historical information.

It is said that Mr. Wilkins is over forty, and that he has never written fiction before. Evidently he has not been wasting his time, however, for few first novels have been more facile and technically accomplished than this book of his, which possesses nearly all the qualities most likely to please the public. "And So—Victoria" clearly seems to be born for the best-seller lists.

A Dumb Egg with a Streak of Genius

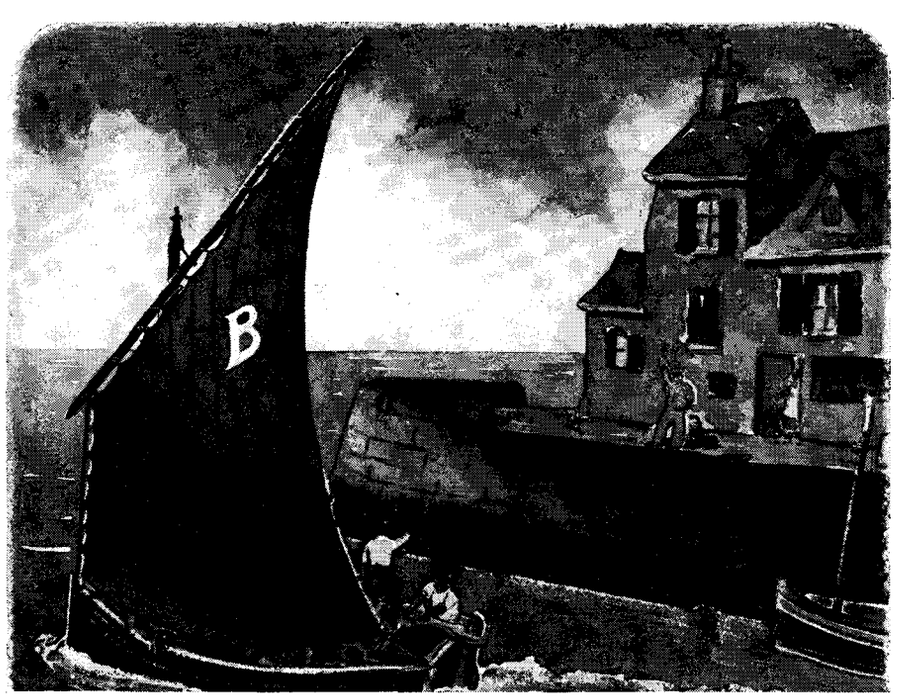
THE ANOINTED. By Clyde Brion Davis. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE STEVENS

TAKE a young man out of an early Sherwood Anderson story; put him through the adventures of a Conrad hero; get him to tell about himself in the style of Ring Lardner; and the result will be something like "The Anointed." That is just to give you an idea, not to suggest comparisons, because this novel is genuinely original. The publishers call it a "discovery." That word, so often washed and ironed and hung out to dry on the literary lines, connotes the promise and immaturity of a first novel. "The Anointed" is a first novel, or at least the first by its author to be published, but there's nothing immature about it. Or promising. It's a performance.

Don't let any one tell you the story. Those about to read "The Anointed" have much to look forward to in the career of Harry Patterson, who runs away to sea, gets in a jam with the Mexican police, is shipwrecked in the Caribbean, performs a feat in the Bay of Biscay which the Breton sailors take for a miracle, goes through some more adventures, and winds up in San Francisco, where he meets . . . But that's enough. Let Harry tell it to you. Harry is a picturesque citizen, with roots in America and aspirations in the stars. He's a comic character who has to be taken seriously, a dumb egg with a streak of genius. He notices things that other people don't notice; for instance, early in his travels he sees that smoke always spirals in the same direction above the equator, and always in the opposite direction below the equator. After a lucky escape from danger, he decides, without conscious egotism, that he must have been put on earth to find out what it's all about. He is ready to "cross the black ocean" if he can discover all the answers, and he is never afraid, even when lost at sea in an open boat. Any one who has ever believed in his own luck will understand Harry.

"The Anointed" is written in the authentic American language. Through Harry's own words, Mr. Davis makes you see him as he sees himself and from the outside as well; the style is a double-edged instrument of irony, like that which Lardner wielded so expertly. But the irony here is sympathetic, not caustic; it is perceptive, humorous, imaginative. It seems a peculiar thing to say, but it is true that imagination and humor are both rare in American novels these days; in combination, they are almost a forgotten art. It is this combination which makes "The Anointed" something special in the way of prose fiction, at a time when fiction is tenaciously dominated by hard-boiled realists and historical romanticists. There ought to be many readers who will delight in it. Some may argue about the ending; this reviewer thinks that what happens to Harry on page 275 (it's a short book) is exactly right, providing the perfect conclusion, unforeseeable and unforgettable, to Harry's voyages of cosmic discovery. But the point is open to debate. However, don't believe any one who calls "The Anointed" a fantasy. There's nothing in it that could not happen; given the character of a Harry—and it's a gift to be grateful for—everything in the book *had* to happen.



JACKET DESIGN FOR "THE ANOINTED," BY COSGRAVE

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The Passing Show

THE SAGA OF AMERICAN SOCIETY, A Record of Social Aspiration 1607-1937. *By Dixon Wechter. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1937. $4.

Reviewed by ARTHUR TRAIN

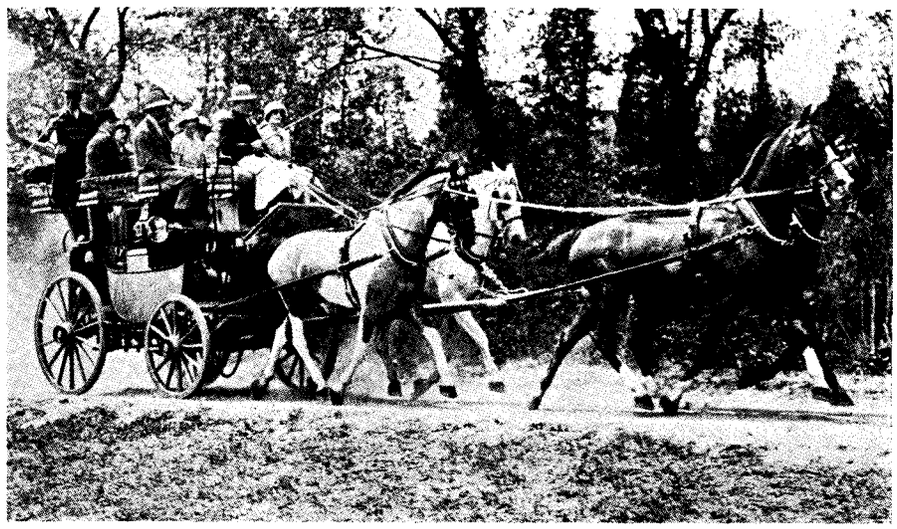
MR. WECHTER has written a useful and unique book. With indefatigable industry he has gathered practically everything relating to what is known as American Society, both from original written sources and by personal interrogation of individuals. The documentation is complete, the bibliography valuable, while the index contains a roster of names not only of great interest but useful for ready reference. In fact I know of no book in any way like it. While it lacks the intrinsic value of a contemporary diary, such as that of Philip Hone, or of a journal of travel and comment like Mrs. Trollope's, it contains the best and salient features of all of them. It is, in fact, a serious piece of work, compiled and written by an author of erudition and literary skill, who has no illusions as to the actual social value of Society itself in an era of economic transition, and who records skilfully, wittily and benignly a phase of American civilization which will never be seen again—certainly in like objective form. He is to be congratulated upon having sought out and talked to the survivors of an older generation, such as the late Frank Gray Griswold, and countless others.

Mr. Wechter sees the real values in the lives of those of whom he writes, has malice towards none and charity for all. Occasionally one feels that the sharp point of his pen may have been somewhat blunted by his sense of *noblesse oblige,* the recognition of his position as a guest or, at least, as one to whom information has been given or in whom confidences have been reposed. He never calls a louse a louse, although he has a wide and familiar knowledge of the evils that wealth has brought to thousands of American families and the demoralizing influences of many of those who possess it. His book is no diatribe against or indictment of the rich, nor is it so intended. He draws no lessons, attempts no philosophy, wisely leaving that to generational novelists like John Galsworthy or Edna Ferber. A story having as its analogue the Vanderbilt family from the old Commodore with his ferryboat down to his great-grandson could be made to carry all the implications which are latent in Mr. Wechter's book. His task has been merely to supply the data of an immense, if necessarily rather sketchy, panorama. This he has done in 504 pages which while neither strictly speaking history, satire, entertainment, or Almanach de Gotha, are yet something of all of them.

So immense is his canvas that it is not without justification the jacket states: "Dixon Wechter reveals in this volume the whole panorama of American society, and records the development and changes that have formed it as it exists today," —to which it might have added "from the earliest colonial log cabin to the latest swimming pool at Southampton, from the tidewater families of Old Virginia to the newest lotion endorsing aristocracy, from Abigail Adams to Elsa Maxwell"—which, in the vernacular, is "saying something." But with all his gossip, personal anecdotes, humor, and the accounts of the gaucheries and trivia incident to the occupations of persons engaged merely in amusing themselves—his accounts of etiquette, entertaining, clubs, and sport—Mr. Wechter is no Emily Post, Cholly Knickerbocker, Lucius Beebe, or "Valentine's Manual."

The later chapters dealing more largely with personalities are naturally lighter than those at the beginning in which he explodes again the already exploded thesis that the earlier settlers of the colonies were aristocrats or entitled to be so regarded save as they gradually came to predominate in wealth. American Society, like most other societies all over the world, has always been plutocratic in its origins. He has carefully analyzed the claims to aristocracy of the first families of Virginia, New York, and Boston, oftimes with rather ludicrous results. The chapter in which he does this—"Planter, Puritan and Patron"—taken with the following—"Aristocracy in Retreat," a lively account of the democratic reaction against wealth during and subsequent to the Jeffersonian period—are the most valuable in the book. Much of what follows has been done before—even in greater detail—although never assembled in a single volume or nearly so completely documented.

Had "The Saga of American Society" been published thirty years ago, it would have been regarded as a sensational exposé of the pretentious rich—even an act of *lèse majesté.* Today, in a sense, it is old stuff. The multitude think no more of millionaires than they do of monkeys, and neither do the millionaires! We are living in a saner world where the antics of a Harry Lehr or the absurdities of a Ward McAllister no longer receive as news much more emphasis than they deserve. Just as we have come to know that all "foreigners ain't fools," so we realize that a man or woman can enjoy playing bridge and even drinking cocktails and still be a pretty good sort. No one more than the rich, and the Jews, enjoy the jokes on themselves. And at that, where are the "rich" of yesterday anyhow? The picture is indeed a colorful one. But the pageant really ended a good while ago, and while some people still care how many American families are entitled to bear coats of arms, why Ward McAllister limited New York's inner circle to four hundred, or what was the largest sum paid to a foreign nobleman upon marrying the daughter of a rich American family, most of them are more interested in Hollywood than in Park Avenue—in Greta Garbo or Myrna Loy than in Doris Duke Cromwell or Barbara von Haugwitz-Reventlow. Clark Gable and Gary Cooper are of more current social interest than J. P. Morgan or Vincent Astor. No, the old gray millionaire ain't what he used to be. "The Saga of American Society" does not pretend to have the value of a work like Professor William Stearns Davis's thrilling "Influence of Wealth on Imperial Rome," and, covering so broad a field as it does, it lacks the vitality of books like "Only Yesterday." It is valuable as history, amusing in its anecdotes, and it will interest a host of readers who wish to see whether they or their acquaintance have been mentioned.



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A MAN OF SOCIETY ARRIVING AT A FRIEND'S ESTATE FOR A HUNT MEET

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English '37

The Novelist and the Reader: VI

WE have found a primary dynamic element in physical action and dialogue. But the characters of a novel are not always moving about the stage or talking to one another. What is movement in fiction when they are not?

If we approach the question from its converse, several kinds of inert material, material which lacks movement, come to mind at once. The commonest is what the textbooks call description. Up to a few years ago it was a universal custom of college courses in writing—it is less than universal now only because experienced writers have occasionally been permitted to teach composition—to distinguish descriptive writing as a separate genre of literary art, which is absurd. Description for its own sake exists nowhere in prose literature. Even in the loose technique of the earlier novel descriptive passages had, at least theoretically, a functional purpose, and a sustained development of fiction has been to confine them to it more exclusively. This development has accelerated during the last forty years, and today it would not be excessive to say that any description which has not been converted to other uses of fiction is a stigma of amateurishness.

When that flat statement has been made, it must be immediately qualified: there are several uses which may be served and, as with all principles, the margin of toleration or indifference is variable. Certainly, however, the leisurely set pieces of all novels before 1850 are intolerable today: the modern reader simply skips them. If a novelist began his book by introducing the traditional solitary horseman riding across the middle distance at evenfall and then went on for twenty pages writing beautifully about the mystery and glamour of the landscape, he would have no readers left by page twenty and only a few by the bottom of page one. Novels could begin and go on in that way in Mrs. Radcliffe's time, or in Scott's. They cannot begin that way today, and it is doubtful if anyone but a student under compulsion reads such passages when he turns to Scott. The volunteer reader begins with chapter two, and when he comes to similar passages later in the text he leaps over them and picks up the novel where it begins moving again. Such passages may be beautifully written, they may contain topographical or botanical information of the greatest erudition, they may accomplish whatever is meant by "setting a mood" or "creating atmosphere," but they are not fiction in its proper terms. They do not move as fiction must if it is to be read with satisfaction. They are irrelevant to what happens, they are not part of the psychological process of the scene, and they are not engaged with the emotions of the characters.

But not only the elaborate set pieces of description are suspect. The incidental paragraphs and even phrases in which the novelist sets the stage and gives the scene a spatial existence risk marring the illusion and rousing the reader's resistance. A novelist is constantly tempted to be a scene-painter, an interior decorator, and a dressmaker, to show himself an artist in color and line, and especially to display the accuracies and individualities of "observation" which literary people, usually the least observant of God's creatures, pride themselves on possessing. It is a temptation which the amateur always yields to, but it is a short way to disorder, lifelessness, and irritation. Miss Cather once made a plea for a kind of novel in which accessory detail should be entirely avoided—the "furniture" of the page, the incidental and valueless litter of physical or personal trivia with which the scene is frequently encumbered. The tendency of modern fiction has been to evolve that kind of novel, though not precisely in the way which Miss Cather argues for. For furniture is valueless only while it is inert; it may become dynamic and therefore valuable by acquiring emotional meaning in the novel.

The problem is complicated by the necessities of the reader. The scene must exist for him and cannot do so unless it has reality in space—some kind, if only a tenuous and intermittent kind, of geographical location and scenic or architectural or personal validity. He must have some way of visualizing characters against background; he cannot accept disembodied voices speaking in a void. There must be something for him to see; more important still, there must be something for him to feel in an environment. But he will balk if he is offered too much, and what he is offered must be of a special kind.

Thus, at the simplest level, descriptions of persons are precarious. A detective may be able to form a visual image of an escaped criminal from the data typed on a card at police headquarters, but he is a specialist and the general reader is not. A novelist who tells you that Emmy Lou stands five feet two, weighs a hundred and twelve pounds, is twenty-six inches round the waist, and wears size five shoes with three-inch heels, has on a dirndl dress in yellow and blue and openwork stockings and a kerchief round her neck, and has hair that looks like minted gold when the sun shines on it, eyes like valley mist of an October morning, and knees like full moons carved of stone—has destroyed an impression rather than created one. If you met Emmy Lou you would at best observe only one or two of those details at first glance and would require time to take the rest of them in, if in fact you ever bothered to observe them. And in fiction such data are neutral until the three-inch heels or the misty eyes acquire emotional import for one of the characters. Similarly, an enumeration of objects in a landscape or a room requires the reader to notice more than he would be aware of if he were present on the scene. The eye sees and the mind records only a few salient objects at first glance, and requires time and especially interest in order to notice the rest. The reader who is asked to recognize and even piece together an unnatural number of details is antagonized; a skillful novelist, if he regards such details as important, will contrive to convey them a little at a time, indirectly so far as possible, and as a product of the activity or emotion of the scene itself.

There is also a kind of descriptive detail sometimes insisted on in fiction which is either tautological or altogether irrelevant. When Mark Twain composed an appendix of various kinds of weather reports and asked the reader to distribute them through the novel at his pleasure, he was announcing a sound principle. Unless the weather, the calendar, and the time of day have a bearing on the action or emotion of the scene they do not matter, and mention of them is a kind of offense. Similarly with the noise and color of the crowd, the process of the seasons, the heavenly bodies, the whistle of trains by night, the thousand-odd offstage and background items that dangerously unbar the door to the novelist's poetic impulses. Similarly with items which the reader takes as axiomatic—who does not need to be told that grass is green or the sky blue, will believe that characters are dressed appropriately and make natural gestures unless told otherwise, and will

(*Continued on page* 13)

The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Letters to the Editor: *Special Pleading in Literature*

Don't Shoot the Editor

SIR:—I was genuinely interested in answers you received to the stimulating squib which appeared in the *Review* on June 3rd:

For a Poet: The great opportunity for our poets just now is to write some poetry that somebody will like.

Replies to the above appearing in the *Review* of July 10th, resented the insinuation that poets do not write what people enjoy. I, for one (being of the watery-brained clan)—do not resent the aspersion. All verse-makers, whether *poets* or not, write too much. They dash off reams and yards and loads of mere piffle, with only an occasional verse of merit, and I firmly believe that editors as a rule are always delighted to get what in their opinion is worth-while verse. The trouble is, people who scribble rhymes get the idea they are going to get rich SELLING. Well, my fish-eyed brothers of the quill (or portable)—perish the thought! Get a job selling life insurance, and scribble sonnets when the boss isn't looking. Or (if you happen to be a female poet)—marry some money-grabbing poetry-hater, and on the margin of time left from nursing his household and children, listen for the flutter of a mysterious wing. If you are sincere in your devotion to the Muse, and your eye continues "in a fine frenzy rolling"—even while frying the steak, no power on God's green earth can subdue you—not even the hard-boiled editors. But, I beg of you, don't deluge the magazines and newspapers with your floriferous fungi imperfecti. Write briefly, succinctly—and most of the time not at all. And remember, do not shoot the poor editor (paraphrasing a western phrase)—he's doin' his darndest.

GENE BOARDMAN HOOVER.

Kansas City, Mo.

Poets or Press Agents

SIR:—I agree with you that critics, as theorists, have not succeeded very well in explaining the function of literature in the modern world. But is an excess of theorizing the cause of the confusion among critics? Not in my view. A false theory can be corrected only by one that is more nearly true. What we have needed for a long time now is a theory which explains the importance that we attach to art, and why we feel that Shakespeare was no less a man than Newton, and his plays as valuable as the "Principia." Literature in the meantime, until its general purpose has been more satisfactorily defined, will be used by special groups to advance their causes, and young poets will be seduced from their true calling to become press agents for those whose chief interest is not poetry.

I think we shall discover some day, despite John Dewey, that the functions of the poet and the scientist are the same: each gives us true knowledge of experience. If the function of literature is so conceived then we will understand why literature is more fundamental than any political or social doctrines, or any moral code. We will understand wherein the Humanists were wrong, and why psychologists may learn from poetry, and why the poet has nothing, *nothing* to learn from psychology. We will see why the attempt of the Marxists to use literature to further communism is like the attempt of Hitler to use anthropology to prove the superiority of the German race. The poet is the judge of institutions, but it is not his task to create new ones; if all poets became communists who would judge communism once it were established? If capitalism breeds misery and injustice then let the poet cry out the truth, but from his own experience.

Literature has a tradition of its own. There are varieties of literary works, and we distinguish them according to their forms, moods, and subject matter; but all varieties have an element in common which makes them literature and which sets them off from other kinds of human inquiry. All the world and its people may be dealt with by the literary artist, but the discipline of literature is unique; it has its own history, its own methods, its own criteria of criticism. To import into a consideration of literature any notions which have their origin in other fields will make for muddled thinking, and bring about that confusion of categories which is at the bottom of the intellectual bewilderment of the times.

The cause of the present confusion in criticism is not that critics disagree over the merits of literary works, but that extraneous notions have been introduced into the theory of art. A term has a clear meaning only within the branch of enquiry which gave rise to it, and it is not transferable to any other branch without a confusion of thought. When criticism has been purged of its alien terms then its health will be restored, and authors, to the great advantage of literature, will be praised and blamed for the right reasons.

G. R. WALKER.

Boston, Mass.

"WE HAVE THREE OR FOUR LITERARY CELEBRITIES, AND THE REST ARE JUST NICE PEOPLE."

"Three Comrades"

SIR:—Referring to the question "Why didn't 'Three Comrades' go to the top of the heap?" ("Trade Winds," July 17), I offer these reasons:

(1) Two-thirds of the book deal with enthusiasm over cars; and that is old stuff for Americans: no more exciting than bread and meat.

(2) Tippling lost its romance for Americans with Prohibition and its repeal. The translation of "Bierstube" as "Pub" is offensive, as is the slang, both English and American, used in translation, *e.g.*, "O.K.," "Step on the gas," etc.

(3) We no longer like a heroine to die of T.B., especially if she has refused to obey the rules of the sanitarium.

(4) Deathbed scenes of the tubercular have been overworked in "Camille" and "La Bohème," and a lover's agony after his mistress's death by Ernest Hemingway.

MARY HENDERSON.

New Haven, Conn.

Henry M. Flagler

SIR:—The undersigned, who is at work on a biography of the Standard Oil magnate and benefactor of Florida, Henry M. Flagler (to be published by Hillman-Curl) would very much like any primary source material originating in Canandaigua, New York; Bellevue or Cleveland, Ohio; Saginaw, Michigan, or the East Coast of Florida. He will take good care of and pay postage for any such data which is available.

WALLACE GOLDSMITH.

420 W. 118 St.,
New York City.

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A New British Satirist

SUGAR IN THE AIR. By E. C. Large. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by GORHAM MUNSON

E. C. LARGE, whose biting tragi-comedy of commerce, "Sugar in the Air," was the July selection of the British Book Society, is a new novelist of exciting importance. Presumably young, he has for several years been writing science articles and literary sketches for the *New English Weekly*, and in these he has displayed the exact-mindedness of the scientific researcher. The remarkable thing about his prose in "Sugar in the Air" is its force and exactitude; to borrow a fashion-word from architecture, it is *functional* prose, simple, powerful, lean, emphatic, gleaming like steel. A specimen:—

> The car pulled up at the works door, and Mr. MacDuff, stetson hat on head, kid gloves and silver-loaded cane in his hands, kicked open a wicket gate and went in. He went straight as a line of force to an office which had been made, like others beside it, with bare brick walls from the floor to the roof, and he demanded the immediate appearance of Monsieur Cocaine. A fawning little man, Cocaine's assistant, almost scraped the ground and scuttled off. After a considerable time Monsieur Cocaine himself pushed open the door with insolent slowness and stood resentfully in the opening as in a frame. His left sleeve was empty and pinned to his coat. MacDuff wasted no time on greetings but at once opened fire.

A delight for its tensile prose, "Sugar in the Air" is entertaining fiction throughout. It is the story of Charles Pry, unemployed chemical engineer, who gets a job with Hydro-Mechanical Constructions (Great Britain) Ltd., supposed to be making crystal houses but actually, the Kosoff construction method having proved faulty, trying to develop the hints of a half-mad inventor on producing by photosynthesis sugar from the atmosphere. In collaboration with a celebrated research chemist, Dr. Zaareb, young Pry hits upon the final step in a method of manufacturing synthetic sugar out of the air. This victory of research is thrillingly and convincingly narrated by Mr. Large. Pry now has to deal with a priceless set of buffoons called the Board of Directors; he has to learn to promote and sell the product which has been named "Sunsap"; he has to withstand the undermining intrigues of a despicable plant manager well named Mr. Cloacher. In the end Cloacher turns the Board against Pry, the Sunsap business peters out, the plant and process (for extracting sugar from the air!) are sold for a song to Universal Units, a distributing organization. As story, the operations of Hydro-Mechanical Constructions has all the intrinsic interest of a *Fortune* write-up of industrial-financial history. This interest has been heightened by the novelist's resourcefulness in portraying character and extracting "values" from situations.

The "values"? Serious entertainment. Love of clean technical competence in a mucky, incompetent business world. Sardonic humor, tough, masculine English eighteenth century variety. A social outlook derivable from no chunks of didacticism—there are none in this book—but from the angle of the author's vision.

The angle of vision is a comparatively fresh one of most interesting possibilities as the late Eimar O'Duffy, John Hargrave, Irene Rathbone, Charles Jones, and now E. C. Large have demonstrated. We may call it the artist-engineer's point of view, and it results in fiction of as distinctive a type as "proletarian novels." It is fiction that is acting on Balzac's injunction to show the effects of money on society and individuals, and between the lines of Mr. Large's novel a critique of our money system may be read. Between the lines is exactly where such a message should be placed, for Mr. Large knows that imaginative literature should partake of the cryptogram or it becomes merely a disguised tract.

The Provincial Lady on Modern Divorce

NOTHING IS SAFE. By E. M. Delafield. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by KATHARINE SIMONDS

MISS DELAFIELD'S new novel takes us into the minds of two very likable and touching children, and makes them seem much more reasonable, responsible, and decent than the minds of adults, who entrench themselves behind half-truths to defend their convenience, and when their lack of logic is exposed by the child, take refuge in force.

Julia and Terry's parents had always seemed perfectly normal to them, and it never entered their heads that they would not always all remain together. Then, suddenly, when Julia was 10 and Terry 12, their parents were divorced, and both married again. Mummie took on large, pink Captain Prettyman, who bullied the sensitive Terry. Eager to propitiate him, Mummie was obliged alternately to neglect the children and to plead with them to accept injustice. Stout-hearted Julia could not be harmed by all this, but her worry grew for Terry, whom she adored and mothered. Soon the Prettyman patience was exhausted, and they were sent to Daddy. He had married arty Petah—an obviously false creation, as are most of Miss Delafield's "modern" young women. In their smoke-filled mews, where there was never a pause between cocktail parties, the children could not long be welcome, either; they soon found themselves at their grandmother's house. Here was some measure of stability; but they suffered from her old-fashioned severity, and her disapproval of the whole situation. Over the rest of their summer holidays, there was the shadow of their realization that they belonged nowhere, except together. But the intolerable blow is still to fall; for the psychotherapist to whom Terry is sent rules that they are too dependent on each other.

E. M. DELAFIELD

The parents are harder to believe than the children, because Miss Delafield has been carried away by her moral indignation. To have brought these children up so unprepared for unreason or violence or neglect, the parents must have been unusually inadequate; and except for an occasional tantrum of Daddy's at Terry, we are given no hint of this, so that their complete and disastrous withdrawal, their sudden cessation of a sense of spiritual responsibility, is a breath-taking surprise. Moreover, in showing the children's tragedy, Miss Delafield has disregarded the tragedies of Mummie and Daddy, and thus weakened and falsified her whole book.

The situation irresistibly recalls Kipling's "Baa, Baa Black Sheep," with its intolerable picture of children "who have lost all their world." Like the Kipling story, too, "Nothing Is Safe" confronts one again with the overwhelming despair and rage of the child who wants to live by reason, when he meets instead unreason enforced by authority and violence. Adults seem to have accepted as inevitable the variance between experience and precept, but the child struggles in a long heart-breaking battle between faith in the older people who make his laws, and his own reluctant perceptions.

Yet, touching, and skillful and readable as the writing is—and Miss Delafield can hardly write otherwise—one cannot feel that she has presented the whole situation, nor written a profound book. One salutes again, in her observation, her pleasantly acid satire, and her firm underlying moral standards, the Provincial Lady, visiting a foreign place, and jotting down her impressions.

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Men of the Future

FREUD, GOETHE, WAGNER. By Thomas Mann. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $2.

Reviewed by IRWIN EDMAN

THE reflections of one major writer upon another, whether contemporary or of the past, are likely to be as significant for what they reveal of the mind of the author as they are as rays of illumination upon their subject matter. In the case of these essays of Thomas Mann, they are fascinating and instructive on both counts. The very choice of these three themes, Freud, Goethe, and Wagner, and the placing of them in that order, indicate something of Mann's spiritual origins and attachments, the areas in which his mind characteristically dwells. What he finds particularly to admire in Freud, to celebrate in Goethe, and to articulate with singular subtlety and beauty of Wagner's untranslatable genius, tells us much that we wish to know of this most humanistic of contemporaries, and confirms in unmistakable personal avowals what the attentive reader must already have gathered from "The Magic Mountain," from "Death in Venice," from "Joseph and His Brethren."

Nor is it without significance that these three essays were given as lectures in New York at the celebration of the fourth year of the University in Exile. Mann is like Wagner, of whom he asks us to note that "he did not cling to the delusion of the German citizen that one may be a man of culture, yet not of politics—this madness to which Germany owes her misery." The greatest humanist of our time is a voluntary exile from his native Germany from which humanism like his is barred. What he says about Freud, Goethe, and Wagner is not unnaturally or unimportantly colored by when he says it. On the other hand, when a mind of a high order has something to say about other minds of the first order, it is bound to be illuminating, no matter how often the subjects have been discussed.

Thomas Mann finds in psychoanalysis, as philosophy rather than simply as therapeutic, several bonds with literature and with the creative impulse in general. In both he finds "a love of truth, of life's sweet-and-bitter, a psychological excitation, a clarity of vision, to such an extent that the conception of truth almost coincides with that of psychological perception and recognition." Secondly, "both consist in an understanding of disease, a certain affinity with it, outweighed by fundamental health, and an understanding of its productive significance." Thirdly—and this is apparently a point by which Dr. Mann sets particular store—the artist is the user, "smiling, childlike, and profound, of the 'myth' rising out of his subconscious." Psychoanalysis has opened itself to him as more than curative; it is a way of redemption. It opens the path—Mann quotes Goethe in this connection—to a "free folk on a free soil," a free folk of the future whom Freud's vision will have freed from fear and hate, and "made ripe for peace."

The reader who remembers the "will to disease" in "The Magic Mountain," the lyric uprush of perversion in the life of the mature artist in "Death in Venice," the myth in Joseph, will not be surprised by any of this, but he will be interested to know how consciously Thomas Mann has thought about these things. He will not find anything out of key in the Goethe essay either, with its delineation of Goethe as that free mind, at once dæmonic and urbane, intensely German and ardently European, and passionately devoted to the "exactitude of the word." Nothing could better delineate Thomas Mann's ideal, and, in large measure, his practice, though his "exactitude of the word" is badly traduced by some of this un-English, almost German translation.

Alfred A. Knopf

THOMAS MANN

On his recent visit to this country.

The most arresting and the longest of the three essays is on "The Sufferings and Greatness of Richard Wagner." I can think of no one but a German literary man of genius, great general and great musical culture, who could have written it. Though long, it is none too long, for it does the almost impossible; it states in the equivalence of words, the texture, the rapture, and the substance of Wagner's music-dramas, besides bringing a fresh insight to bear on the man himself. Mann makes no bones about it; he idolizes Wagner, though not for the same reasons as the Nazis do, and with more critical circumspection. He admits what a bad poet Wagner can be, for "without music Wagner is no poet." He acknowledges his barbarous magnificences, his lack of sense of form, his holy-unholy conglomerate mixing of sensuous delirium and sacramental ecstasy. Dr. Mann is a Wagnerite but not a silly one. But interesting as is his analysis of Wagner, it is like the others most interesting as the testament of the foremost humanist of our time who takes the role of man of letters in a serious, almost prophetic sense, and feels, like Wagner himself, that great art must be an instrument of salvation, the regeneration of a democratic, perhaps of a classless society.

Trial by Prejudice

WHIRLPOOL. By David Lamson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM M. SLOANE III

DAVID LAMSON has good reason to believe a man may be unjustly convicted of murder. It happened to him. In his autobiographical "We Who Are About to Die" he reported what it felt like to be awaiting execution for a crime which he did not commit. "Whirlpool" presents, in the form of a novel, the other side of the medal, a picture of the maze of circumstance, misunderstanding, prejudice, and petty politics which can trap an innocent man and criminally deprive him of the right to go on living.

"It seems to me," one of the people in the book says, "people like to believe the worst of some one else." Certainly the farmers and small-towners of Miller County were quick to believe that Hannibal Norfolk had murdered his brother Joel. The facts that the brothers had fought over Martha, Hannibal's wife, that Joel had disappeared after the fight, and that three years later a skeleton was found buried near Hannibal's farm were enough to prove that he killed his brother.

With Hannibal's arrest the most convincing part of the story begins. The author traces the crescendo progress of Hannibal's real trial, the trial conducted in the newspapers, in the vicious gossip of a small, narrow town, in the political jockeying of the State's attorneys and peace officers. It is there that Hannibal is actually convicted, and not in court nor in the bitterly written jury room scene.

As a piece of exposition, "Whirlpool" is minutely and excitingly written. The stupid, vicious letters, mostly anonymous, which the trial evokes, the idiotic newspaper stories, the ugly intensification of prejudice and hysteria, are skillfully handled. Yet Mr. Lamson's failure to make Hannibal Norfolk a convincing, individual character, and a persistent note of bitterness under the surface of the writing—understandable enough though it is—obstruct the depth and power of what might have been a fine story. Instead, it is a case history of injustice which deserves careful, sympathetic reading rather as social criticism than as fiction.

Mr. Sloane is the author of "To Walk the Night," a psychological mystery story reviewed in our issue of July 10.

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The People vs. Disease

SHADOW ON THE LAND: SYPHILIS. By Thomas Parran, M.D. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1937. $2.50.
TEN MILLION AMERICANS HAVE IT! By S. William Becker, M.D. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1937. $1.35.

Reviewed by THOMAS J. KIRWIN, M.D.

JUST twenty years ago Draft Boards all over the country were feverishly active investigating the physical condition of half a million young men, placed under their scrutiny by the most momentous accounting of citizenry witnessed since Augustus Caesar decreed all the world should be taxed. And when the findings of these Boards were communicated to those deemed fit to know them (I do not use the word published, for they did not ever become matters of public knowledge), it was discovered that the unmentionable disease, syphilis, was very prevalent among young men in all walks of life. At once the Public Health Service, the Army, the Navy, and the Red Cross began working in concert, with a view to preventing those engaged in military or naval service who had not been infected with the disease from acquiring it, and to administer treatment to those already infected, both to remove the menace to others their diseased state represented, and to make them more fit to endure and survive the extraordinary rigors of the life into which a state of war had called them.

Kaiden-Keystone
DR. THOMAS PARRAN

Yet Dr. Becker speaks truly when he says that this 1917 campaign was an inspirational wave of enthusiasm, rather than a concerted and unflagging fight against the disease. That such a fight is now being waged has been apparent for the last few months, for in many lay publications, newspapers, magazines, and now books, dealing with the subject of syphilis in non-technical language, such efforts have been increasingly in evidence. One of the chief promoters of this new attempt to fight a serious and much dreaded disease in the open, instead of in concealment and silence, has been Dr. Thomas Parran, present head of the United States Public Health Service, who now offers us a straightforward book, in which he has endeavored to set forth in words the ordinary man-in-the-street will have no difficulty in comprehending, the salient facts about syphilis, its history, its prevalence, its mode of spread, and the modern weapons which have been provided to assist us in fighting it.

At the same time with Dr. Parran's book appears another from the pen of Dr. S. William Becker, professor of skin diseases at the University of Chicago. The subject matter of these two books is very similar; the manner of treatment is decidedly different. Dr. Becker's point of view is somewhat that of the family doctor who fully realizes that a disease which —at a conservative estimate—affects ten million Americans is no longer an individual problem, yet feels that the methods proved so successful in such European countries as Denmark and Sweden, cannot be applied wholesale to a population such as ours.

Dr. Parran's position is what one would perhaps expect from one who looks at the problem from the wide perspective of a government subsidized public health service. He gives us an excellent history of the commonly accepted origin of the disease, and the remarkable set of circumstances which permitted it to spread over the entire civilized world within the space of a century. Dr. Becker's historical chapter is also excellent, but it does not make such interesting reading—from the lay point of view at any rate. The Parran account of the public health work carried on for many years in Scandinavian countries is inspiring, and will undoubtedly fill the mind of the average American practitioner of medicine with longing for a share in such intelligent coöperation from the government on the one hand and the general public on the other.

Yet when the book is laid aside, one realizes that what Dr. Parran is advocating with so much earnestness, logic, and good sense, is really paternalism in a form peculiarly abhorrent to American traditions and ideals. No one who can count the enormous numbers of untreated victims of this serious disease now roaming our streets this very moment can have any quarrel with his pleas for means whereby each and every victim shall be recognized, instructed as to the nature and seriousness of his ailment, and lastly given such treatment as will render him harmless to those with whom he associates, and in the great majority of cases effect his complete and lasting cure.

The parallels which Dr. Parran makes with the campaign waged by public agencies against tuberculosis, to show what can be done to control and eradicate syphilis, are just ones, his recommendations that state and county agencies erect buildings or otherwise provide hospitalization for those afflicted are certainly worthy of consideration, and his idea of arousing us is in every way admirable.

But to follow the suggestion that all persons affected with syphilis should be given free treatment, and that the charge of all these thousands of infected persons —of every age and from every stratum of society—should devolve upon the government, would be to take a path straight toward "state medicine," and would spell the end of the personal relation which from time out of mind has existed in this country between patient and physician. In a small homogeneous population such as that of Denmark, such things may be possible, but in these United States, the handing over of this well-started campaign, which seeks to free us by letting us know the truth, to be the football of partisan politicians, would mean nothing but utter defeat.

The very idea of free treatment for those who can afford to pay violates the inherent principles upon which the government of this nation was founded. We have no means of knowing whether the blood from the unprotected feet of the Continental Army which stained the snows of Valley Forge carried a syphilitic taint or not. But we do know that that blood was shed in defense of our liberties, chief among which is our right to bear to the extent of our ability our rightful share of the country's responsibilities while at the same time we enjoy the protection of a just and equitable government. This does not mean paternalism; it does not mean that when we have perhaps spent our all in riotous living we have a right to demand from the government the treatment or other measures which we must have administered to us, in order to overcome the physical effects of our folly.

The campaign of publicity and general education in the nature and dangers of syphilis should be pushed by all legitimate means. Every individual who has contracted the disease and is honestly unable to pay for treatment should receive it free. But it should not be forgotten that it is the private physician who will always see the great majority of the cases before anyone else does. Do not forget the obligation of service and of secrecy (if the patient desires it) which has been laid, and is still laid, upon the private physician. We must not let this most excellent movement to fight and exterminate a serious, often deadly disease, be used as an instrument to debase the standing of the general practitioner of medicine, to break down the old bonds of personal interest and sympathy which have heretofore held doctor and patient together in a common effort. If syphilis is to be conquered, it will be done by those who are stubborn defenders of professional freedom, for their aims are higher than the mere regimentation of their curative efforts. And it is in their hands, in the last analysis, that the guardianship of public health actually lies.

Dr. Kirwin is a urologist with the Brady Foundation for Urology, New York Hospital.

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Definition of a Hero

THE ROMANTIC DECATUR. By Charles Lee Lewis. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1937. $3.

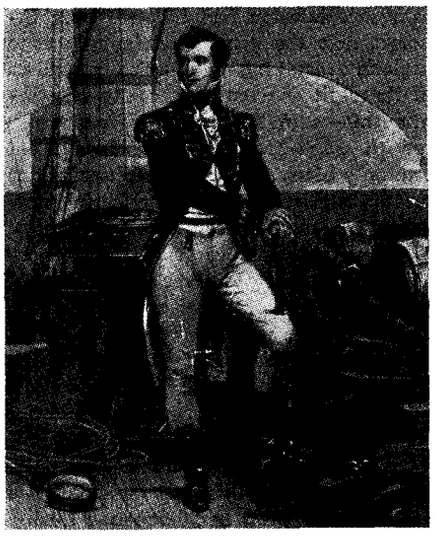
Reviewed by IRVIN ANTHONY

THERE can be no argument with Mr. Lewis about his facts concerning Stephen Decatur. He has done a deal of honest delving. Even the minutiæ have been given close scrutiny. All the old material has been reviewed and used at first hand. Careful, painstaking, the author has hunted down everything, adding new items to the story usefully, and with the modest taste of the scholar. Complete and with enviable accuracy every bit of available data has been incorporated in this latest life of the great naval hero.

Mr. Lewis has evoked a Decatur in accord with the best opinion. John Quincy Adams attended the funeral of Stephen Decatur and came away thinking of him as a kindly, generous, and dauntless spirit. Mr. Lewis apparently accepts this as a definition of his hero. Revealing his story in countless episodes, he refuses to allow Decatur to be anything else but the glittering figure of Napoleonic times. He invites the aid of many commentators to help him. Mahan and Theodore Roosevelt analyze Decatur's loss of the frigate, *President*. Niles's *Weekly Register* and the Norfolk *Beacon* both report Decatur's grandiloquent toast, "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right and always successful, right or wrong," with all the pomp of the press, and without Mr. Lewis admitting that the occasion was so exuberant that a mirror was broken by the flinging of wine glasses at the party, which was by no means heroic and was more than a little drunken. No, that is not quite true. Mr. Lewis does print that fact, but only in the notes. It is in such matters that he fails us, and it is the fault of his attitude toward his hero.

Coldly aloof, Mr. Lewis dismisses the human side of Stephen Decatur. Now and then, in didactic vein, lessons are drawn from this or that action, but for the most part, the author stands staunchly behind his guns hurling broadsides of fact at us, or well digested opinions, but he will hazard nothing further.

It is a safe way to write a biography. One can make no mistakes, be harried by no charges of false emphasis or unfortunate surmise. In the biography of a philosopher, or a scientist, it may represent the acme of perfection, but it was not at all the sort of thing which would rest in the heart of Stephen Decatur, and it would have been a braver effort to try to reveal more of the man and less of his world. Decatur was something more than a juvenile hero. Dashing, warm



STEPHEN DECATUR

of heart, there was often a streak of folly in his valor as there is in all bravery, and no marshaling of facts can take the place of trying to understand that and reveal it as deeper truth.

But this is a quarrel with method, and the fact remains that if Mr. Lewis has endeavored to write a completely authoritative biography he has accomplished his purpose and in masterly fashion. It is an impressive book.

Irvin Anthony is the author of a life of Decatur, published several years ago.

English '37

(*Continued from page* 8)

understand that when they go from place to place they pass over what lies between.

But even when the novelist has accommodated his descriptive details to the reader's need of visual impressions and to his logical and psychological requirements, he has still not done enough with them. Though reduced to a minimum and selected by functional tests, they remain inert so long as they are merely informative to the reader. They are another kind of exposition; they suspend the movement of fiction and remind the reader of the machinery. They acquire movement and come inside the fiction when, besides informing the reader, they are given meaning or emotional significance for the characters. They are, that is, transformed from description as such to experience; they are a component of the lives of the characters and increase the reader's perception and judgment of them.

A celebrated passage from "The Red Badge of Courage," a mannered and immensely calculated novel, will show the principle in operation. Henry Fleming, the boy whose emotions in battle are the subject of the book, has fled from the firing line and for some time has been in the company of a wounded man, who has just died:

> He now sprang to his feet and, going closer, gazed upon the pastelike face. The mouth was open and the teeth showed in a laugh.
>
> As the flap of the blue jacket fell away from the body, he could see that the side looked as if it had been chewed by wolves.
>
> The youth turned, with sudden, livid rage, toward the battlefield. He shook his fist. He seemed about to deliver a philippic.
>
> "Hell—"
>
> The red sun was pasted in the sky like a wafer.

Down to the last line the descriptive material is fused with the action of the scene and cannot be separated from the developing narrative; its descriptive force is derived from the simultaneous revelation of how "he" perceives and responds to the scene. "Pastelike," "showed in a laugh," "had been chewed by wolves" subjectively depict Henry Fleming while they present the scene, and so engage the reader with both. The last line is a simile so vivid that it has become a fixture in anthologies, but it would be irritating and anticlimactic if it were merely a polished phrase interpolated here for its own sake. Instead, while the image is made for the information and assistance of the reader, it is simultaneously an expression of Henry's sudden recognition of the external world at a moment of intense feeling after the panic of flight and the horror of his companion's death. It is colored by that flight and horror, it expresses the boy's emotion quite as much as it describes the scene, it carries the reader farther along in his perception of Henry Fleming. The inertness of a descriptive detail has been overcome by making it render an emotion within the scene.

That sentence of Stephen Crane's shows the process at one extremity. Another extreme may be seen in Joyce's "Glitter-eyed, his rufous skull close to his green-capped desklamp sought the face, bearded amid darkgreener shadow, an ollav, holy-eyed." The skull and eyes of John Eglinton are being seen by Stephen Dedalus, and the presentation is saturated with the melancholy and resentment of Stephen's present mood. Presenting John Eglinton to the reader, it is at the same time a further exploration of Stephen, and its descriptive function is supported by its emotional momentum. This is the subjective method doing precisely what Crane did objectively.

The run of the mill descriptive touches that are present on nearly every page of a novel usually lie well within such extremes. Nevertheless when they are effective they observe the common principle —they are important to the characters and impinge on their emotions. Like most other elements of fiction they serve more than one function and tend to move simultaneously on more than one level of significance. (*To be continued*)

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Artist as a Proletarian

(*Continued from page 4*)

comic strip, and pulp, were set up as the supreme arbiter of artistic taste.

Oppressed by these frugal conventions, the young proletarian moved toward a discipline which endeavored to affirm and extend accepted literary values and, moreover, to assert and deepen the native quality of modern American writing; it was finally apparent to him that a mature literature could not be created solely out of the immediate plans and activities of a party but must be cut out of the whole grain and fibre of national existence. Although he was denounced by his "leftist" comrades, who insisted that he was relapsing into an art-for-art-sake position, he was not trying to sever the tree of literature from its social roots but from the obstructions which would not allow it to spread its branches.

At this point the trend of events veered, and soon the literary movement of the left was totally remodeled. To some extent, the economic upturn was responsible: it partially restored the old temptations which had confronted the pre-depression author; in several cases, it even made leftwing fame a stepping stone to commercial success. This development was abetted by the rising popularity of proletarianism, which threatened to become an intellectual fad like humanism or psychoanalysis.

A more direct cause was the political metamorphosis of the left. In the struggle to stem the advance of fascism, a new political lineup was established, and along with it a united front of intellectuals was formed. Proletarian writers urged liberal savants to join in the defense of culture against fascist assault; the appeal brought an influx of allies, with disparate philosophies, to the Marxian camp.

Immediately the gates were opened: everybody was invited inside. Before, the entrances had been patrolled by self-appointed spokesmen who catechised every applicant; now, not only the guards but the doors and even the walls were removed. Carping reprimands for the slightest deviation were now replaced by affable acceptance of all comers. Before, novelists had been lambasted because they did not write about militant workers; now, it didn't matter what they dealt with—as long as they were against fascism. . . . In a year or two, the intense preoccupation with communist materials —which during the crisis years produced the type of writing found in much of the anthology, "Proletarian Literature in the United States"—was dispersed and dissolved. It was a relief to see the old "leftist" excesses routed, but these excessive emphases were wiped out so thoroughly that there remained no (Marxian) emphasis at all.

Seen in perspective, the new point of view was actually a result of the same fundamental error of the past—the subjection of literature to the tactics of a political party. The bedrock approach to revolutionary culture had not changed but simply the political "line." Where all things proletarian had hitherto been favored, now the general tendency was to acclaim everything anti-fascist, regardless of its merit or even its hostility to communism—as in the indiscriminate praise for "It Can't Happen Here." In the old era, only Marx's and Lenin's observations on art were free from criticism; now critics who maintained that even nostalgic feudal fiction "belonged to us," were heralded as Marxist. However wholeheartedly the young revolutionist agreed with the strategy of the people's front as a barrier to the fascist offensive, and endorsed the alliance with bourgeois intellectuals against a common opponent, he could not reconcile the automatic transference of these practical measures into intrinsic literary laws. Yet this was essentially a repetition of what had happened during the heyday of the pioneers.

The new about-face of what passed for Marxist criticism had a curious effect: it revived the ancient dilemma of the connection between literature and politics which had consumed the thoughts of the young proletarian when he first became aware of the John Reed Clubs. If, despite the best of intentions on the part of political leaders, the proletarian arts were chained to the exigencies of a political movement—which meant that esthetic ideals had to be sacrificed whenever they clashed with practical realities of the hour—how was literary sincerity possible? Or was there an insoluble contradiction between literature and momentary tactics? In raising this question, the young proletarian was not considering a return to the ivory tower; he could no longer doubt the necessity of participating in the class conflict as a man and in the clash of political ideas as a thinking person, or their relation to his writing; but what he objected to was the way in which these *related* factors were *identified,* as, for example, the way in which an act of literary evaluation was subsumed within an act of persuading a person to join up.

Or was this subservience inevitable in an epoch of severe social crisis? Was this "cultural coarsening" unavoidable, as one critic would have it; was it true that today "men of thought tend increasingly to approximate the psychology of men of action" because the "business of saving civilization increasingly ousts from their minds the idea of enriching it"; that, consequently, there "must follow all along the line a relaxation of standards, both ethical and esthetic" because it is "less important that the search for truth should survive than that the cancers of society should be cut out"? Could the character in "Bread and Wine" be on the right track when he laments: "Alas for all professions that have as their ultimate aim the salvation of the world; for the sake of saving others you ended by losing yourself"—that is, that joining a political party irrevocably doomed intellectual freedom, that today there was no free choice for the individual?

These questions cascaded through the mind of the young generation. To some of its members the answer was a ruthless, individualistic one, clear and straight: as men of letters, they would negate any influence which attempted to impair the integrity of their artistic criteria—as long as this was humanly, physically, possible. The principal effect, however, was to reduce the young proletarian to a complete state of perplexity. The collapse in the demand for his work from the dwindling leftwing literary press, together with his own confused dissatisfaction over the earlier agitational forms of expression, topped off by the fear that the contradiction between political tactics and art was insoluble at least in the present era, sent him staggering—and contributed a new set of quandaries to the ones which harassed him from the instant he touched literary experience.

Confronted by these seemingly endless series of oppositions, the young proletarian has shuttled from one spot to another, never finding himself in a situation which would enable him to get the utmost out of his natural gifts. Largely for this reason, there has been an alarming mortality of youthful talents—though perhaps not more than in previous stages of our history—who have charged forward once or twice but have been quickly overwhelmed and scattered, at least for a while.

Obviously these indecisions could never be a perfect schooling for a finished social art which, unlike precious letters, demands the heights of moral vision, the firmest grasp of human and literary values, knowledge and insight and, above all, *breadth;* the kind of art that issues only out of long preparation, diligence, and perseverance, growing sturdily out of fertile soil and untouched by extraneous elements which would break the stalk of its purpose.

Under the most favorable circumstances, the task is formidable, the objective far distant. Today our fledgling, tossed about in the turmoil of his age, faces an obstacle which makes all his other social difficulties seem very petty. Daily the scourges of our epoch, war and fascism, threaten to upearth not only the seeds of future creation but the fruits of existing culture. And yet in spite of all this our hero must continue to plod up the literary lane, although he dare not ever forget the social responsibilities which our time has thrust upon him.

Alan Calmer was one of the editors of "Proletarian Literature in the United States," an anthology which is a cross-section of writing of the sort.

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Lured by the East

BURTON OF ARABIA. THE LIFE STORY OF SIR RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON. By Seton Dearden. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1937. $3.

THE EARLIER LETTERS OF GERTRUDE BELL. Collected and Edited by Elsa Richmond. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation. 1937. $3.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM THOMSON

MR. SETON DEARDEN'S biography of Burton of Arabia is remarkable in one respect at least. It lets Burton speak for himself, and it might truthfully be described as a sort of résumé of Burton's own works with some interludes from his wife's letters.

The voice, then, is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Sir Richard speaks, but his role and lines are in the capable hands of Mr. Dearden.

Mr. Dearden's Burton is decidedly a Vice, "Sensual Appetite" personified, or perhaps just "Lusty Juventus." Of a bawdy, essentially virile temperament and sensual in the extreme, with his whole sexual logic bound up in the exotic polygamous tenets of the East, his normal propensity, even in Darkest Africa, not to mention Boulogne, is to cock a knowing eye at the fair sex. His life was spent dabbling in the *erotica* of the Orient, and his *ars amatoria,* pathologically speaking, is by no means inferior to that of Ovid.

For such a characterization of Burton justification enough could be found probably in Lady Burton's letters and in some of Burton's own, not to speak of his translations of "The Thousand and One Nights" and Catullus, although I should prefer for myself Mr. Smither's prose version of Catullus to Burton's versification in every respect. There is also, to be sure, that "even more risky and scandalous work," Burton's translation of "The Scented Garden" of Nafzawi. Lady Burton, it is true, burnt it in holy zeal for the salvation of her husband's soul, but that iconoclastic act merely freed the imagination to follow its natural bent.

Burton himself would have chuckled at Mr. Dearden's effort, and the psychology of the interpretation would also have interested him. But if there was one thing that Burton held holy, it was to give the thing as he saw it. He had an insatiable curiosity for facts, bare facts; and his books of travel are distinguished by their sober account of what he saw. And he observed everything, soil and vegetation, birds, beasts, and their habits, tribal organization and customs, houses, furniture, and ornaments, food, taboos, and burial rites, games and weapons, diseases and cures, exports and language—also, to be sure, sexual behavior. For that, too, was a fact, and a very important one anthropologically; and he gives it its place in his books, its due place and no more.

I have no wish to defend Burton. I probably should not have liked him if I had met him. He had evidently an unpredictable temper. But his essential characteristic, as I see it, was this sincere curiosity about the facts of the problem facing him, and this characteristic of his explains much in his nature and actions that has been sadly misinterpreted. He had an almost blind hatred of authoritarianism and Mrs. Grundy. Obscurantism was the enemy, and he would explore and see for himself anything and everything that roused that avid curiosity of his.

However, granted his analysis of Burton's character, Mr. Dearden has written an amusing story that never flags nor palls. He employs curious phrases occasionally, and there are a few mis-spellings or misprints. These are minor matters, however. The crucial question remains Burton's character, and whatever kind of a man Burton was in other respects, he was undoubtedly a scholar and a scientist, and an honest student must demand that what he did as a scholar and scientist should not be interpreted to adorn a tale or point a moral, however amusing, or clever.

"The Earlier Letters of Gertrude Bell" of Arabia recall to us that sweet reasonableness of the nineteenth century which we now long for, however much we have despised it. For that same reasonableness with its respect for order and authority was the Open Sesame to marvelous adventures and also their raison d'être.

One of the pioneer women of England, an intrepid alpinist, a renowned traveler, archeologist, and administrator, Gertrude Bell, like Richard Burton, fell captive to the lure of the East and found there her life's work. There also she died and lies buried in the sandy cemetery of Bagdad.

Her adventures and archeological studies have already been recorded in "The Letters of Gertrude Bell," published by Lady Bell in 1927, and in her own published works. These "Earlier Letters" are "a record of her childhood and youth," and they give a fascinating picture of the life and education of English girls of a certain class in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The broad and decorous spirit of the nineteenth century breathes through them. A dutiful daughter always, even when she disagrees with her parents and her own happiness is at stake, nevertheless her obedience is not a sign of weakness or of any lack of confidence in her own judgment. She recognizes authority, even if prepared to argue against and do battle with it. "I don't agree with you," she writes her father at twenty, "that good times would settle all difficulties . . . they will no more ensure a continual content among the laboring classes than a ceaseless pulling down of the Tower of London and building it up again will ensure prosperity. I want wealth so to distribute itself—mind, I don't say, so to be distributed by the State—that every class can look after itself without the ceaseless intervention of good times and municipal extravagance which is nothing but pauperism." A most modern note to end up on; and there speaks the nineteenth century to this bedeviled age of ours.

The Will to Live

PRIMITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND ENVIRONMENT. By S. D. Porteus. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by HOMER W. SMITH

DO the several races of mankind differ in natural intelligence? Between the extreme belief that all men are created equal and the other extreme that the "Aryan" race is tops, there is ample latitude for debate. The crux of the question is, where can one find a common measure of intelligence in races so differentiated from each other that all they have in common is the will to live?

Professor Porteus here reports in narrative form his experiences with the Bushman of the Kalahari Desert of South Africa, with a brief preface for comparison on the primitive aborigines of the great Australian Desert. The Kalahari is one of the most miserable of all places on earth in which man has chosen, or been forced, to take up permanent abode. Its featureless hills of sand, held together by hardy Bushman grass, support mostly reptiles and thorny plants—the camel thorn tree, sickle thorn, black thorn, sweet thorn, hook-and-stick, ape-thorn, and wait-a-bit. On occasion a large mammal can be caught in a pit or killed with a poisoned arrow, but commonly there are roots and tubers, seeds, nuts, berries, and melons, supplemented by anteaters, ants and ant eggs, tortoises, frogs, porcupines, bees, and honey. For drink there are secret places where minute quantities of water may be sucked up out of the sand through a hollow reed plugged with grass, or clay pans which are as likely to be caked dry as muddy. And all else failing, there is every other year an abundant crop of the wild tsama melon upon which all desert animal life depends to quench its thirst. The Kalahari "protects because it outdoes in savagery the enmity of the pursuer"; for the Bushman it is a last retreat before extinction, a sanctuary into which their enemies cannot follow.

On Dr. Porteus's final anthropological evaluations this reviewer is not competent to comment, except in one respect: he defines intelligence as "the capacity to enlarge the significance of environment," that is, he would go beyond mere adaptation, which is perfect in many lower animals, and include the potentialities for constructive interpretation. One wonders if this definition of intelligence has not outrun the methods by which it is being measured. But there is no argument that the author has a splendid talent for understanding and portraying primitive life, and for capturing those overtones which, so far as culture is concerned, distinguish man both black and white from his humanoid cousins.

Homer W. Smith is the author of "Kamongo."

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

W. H. DAVIES is a lyrical English poet whose greatest vogue came just before the late Great War, and whose manner is not only wholly natural but essentially timeless. Two books of his are now before me, "The Birth of Song: Poems 1935-36" (Oxford University Press: $1) and "Songs of Joy and Others" (Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc.: 75c). Almost all the poems are brief and lyrical. The second book is a reprint of earlier work and contains the much-quoted poem "The Example."

Here is an example from
A Butterfly; etc.

"Leisure" is another well-known one, and "Sheep," and "The Elements," and that more terrible meditation, "The Sleepers." There is nothing in the new songs that equals these, but Davies has the secret of the old artless song and ballad. "The Witness" still witnesses his human compassion:

The witness to my document
Was called a woman of shame;
She takes my pen, and lifts her clothes,
To kneel, and write her name.

With head bowed down, on bended knees,
She kneels before my chair;
And, writing slowly, rises up—
As a little child from prayer.

To me Davies has always carried with him a far reminder of Blake, with none of the prophetic fury. He represents human nature simple and unspoiled, the whole man and also the eternal child.

Nancy Byrd Turner's "Silver Saturday" (Dodd, Mead: $2) deserved reviewing before this. Miss Turner, too, is a simple poet. And she has charming humor as simply expressed in her poems about the "Robin perched on a Maple-Top" and "The Calm and Courteous Lamb." She speaks of simple people and simple everlasting things. Her verse already has many friends and this new book will content them. There is nothing new or difficult about her work. Her themes have no particular originality, but she occasionally commands a turn of phrase with an individual savor and is always sincere and humane.

Elizabeth Peck's "American Frontier" (Doubleday, Doran: $2) is in line with the poetry concerning earlier America, of which there has been an increasing amount in the last few years. Miss Peck has taught in the South and traveled far into the loneliest Kentucky Mountain counties. She knows the pioneer stock. And she has gathered much data, here, there, and everywhere, of the early pioneer days. Each poem in her book is separate, but they build into an epic outline. She opens with the Ohio Valley in the late eighteenth century, and her locale finds itself in Kentucky and western Virginia, western North Carolina, and eastern Kentucky and Tennessee of about the same period. Thence her various poems traverse the Bluegrass region in the early nineteenth century, the Ohio Valley, Ohio, Central Indiana, early Chicago, Michigan, Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, the Mississippi, Texas, Utah, and so on. She has dug up original material which she first tried to cast into prose. She uses blank verse, free verse, ballad measures, tunes: a great variety of presentation. Many people of the pioneer days are met with. There are tragic stories and tall tales. The book is most important for its vivid local color and its historical narrative interest. The best poems are too long to quote here and would be spoiled by excerpts; but anyone interested in the picturesque side of the early history of this country will enjoy the book.

Kerr Rainsford's "The Maid of Orleans" (Macmillan: $1.75) is a retelling of the Joan of Arc story in blank verse with lyrical and ballad transitions. The old story is always moving and here it is told with fervor, but not, I regret to say with a truly notable handling of the verse. The author's research has been adequate, but his method of narration lacks originality and the fabric of his verse is not deftly woven. With such a great play as Shaw's "Saint Joan" now usurping the subject, it would take a great poet to make the story memorable in verse. Kerr Rainsford, sincere and whole-hearted as his attempt has been, simply does not possess that qualification. In rhyme and meter his verse is jerky and monotonous and the phrase is always obvious. Thus:

Saint Loup has been laid in its ashes,
And Talbot hurled back from its rescue;
Its garrison slain in the ruins,
Midst the smoke and reek of its flame.
It is she—'tis the Maid who has conquered,
Who flung them again into battle.
From tower, and bastion, and turret,
Send the clarion call of her name!

Hard work has evidently gone into the making of this poem, so that one feels sorry to have to criticize it so strictly. But it is only fair to other narrative poems to do so.

Walter Hard, a native Vermonter, writes the kind of free verse that is simply prose arranged according to various lengths of line. However, he has stories to tell of his part of the country, for he has listened to the tales handed down from generation to generation. Considering the fact that he began writing after the age of forty, and has now produced three Vermont books, two of this general type and one a travel book, and in doing so has done a workmanlike job, he is entitled to praise. The name of the present volume is "Vermont Vintage" (Stephen Daye Press: Brattleboro, Vt.: $2).

I can recommend Mr. Hard's book, not as poetry, but to those who are fond of local anecdote and the shrewd and comic things that are said by dyed-in-the-wool native characters, and remembered and quoted through a township. Incidentally Mr. Hard always throws a light on the psychology of Vermont folk.

From Oregon (The Metropolitan Press) comes "Track of the Sun" by *John C. Almack,* drawings by *Bernard Hinshaw.* It starts off with a very roughly wrought ballad of "Old Hickory" that seems at times to be getting whipped into shape; but limps and hobbles along to a trite conclusion. At the other end of the book are some ballads such as might be sold on modern broadsheets, such as "The Ballad of Singin' Joe," which are better of their kind, and in the middle of the book one ballad, of "Captain Drake," has a singing rhythm. Otherwise the small volume is without distinction. One feels a liking for the author, nevertheless, in his gusto and love of adventure; only one wishes that he had made a study of the possibilities of verse.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 174)

VICTOR HUGO—
"SPOILT CHILDREN."

A grandfather broke loose from bounds and crazed
Is what I am. Wrapt in paternity
Naught but a good old headstrong smile am I.
Dear little ones. . . .
Grandsire uncurbed, mad with benignity,
All laws I make them overleap.

Nationwide Approval!

THE CIVIL WAR
AND
RECONSTRUCTION

By J. G. RANDALL
University of Illinois

- "The best brief history of the Civil War in our literature."
  —New York Herald Tribune BOOKS
- "Occupies a place of its own and one that has long waited to be filled."—New York Times.
- "Sound scholarship."
  —Boston Transcript
- "Masterful handling . . . packed with color and drama."
  —Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution
- "Impartiality, intelligent criticism, and graphic presentation."
  —Los Angeles Times
- "A bright and fascinating chronicle."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch

D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY

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The P. E. N. Congress

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THE Fifteenth International Congress of the P. E. N. Clubs, now comprising a representation of the authors of sixty nations, was held in Paris in the week of June 21st. At the opening luncheon on the first platform of the Eiffel Tower, five or six hundred writers were guests; and at the final dinner at Claridge's when Jules Romains presided and speeches were made by members of the French Academy, by the Austrian novelist Franz Werfel, by the Belgian journalist Piérard, by Romains, by Mme. Gabriela Mistral of Chili, and the American delegate, nearly five hundred attended. Humbert Wolfe and J. B. Priestley of England, James Joyce of Ireland, Feuchtwanger for the exiled Germans, Kárel Capek of Czecho-Slovakia, Guglielmo Ferrero the historian, late of Italy, André Maurois, were also present at the Congress.

Of all such international gatherings of intellectuals two histories may be written, of which the less important supplies most of the news. One utility of such gatherings, in my opinion, is to be found in the constant quiet discussion of the trade, the art, and the philosophy of writing, which in several languages is carried on hour after hour by groups in corridors, cafés, and receptions. This Fifteenth Congress of the P. E. N. Clubs was noteworthy for the attempt, not altogether successful, to canalize such discussions in conferences arranged daily under a competent leader, upon the specific problems of poetry, of a contemporary style (if any), and upon the future of letters in a troubled world. I cannot report the results, for I believe there were none. The contemporary style (if any) remained as much a matter of national opinion after the conference in the sumptuous rooms in the Palais Royal, as before. But this is no criticism. The papers read before large audiences here and in the Théâtre Athenée-Jouvet will be published and carry at least their conclusions into print, but the discussions, the best of which were held toward midnight in cafés where protesting French waiters were preparing for the forty-hour week, were, as always, the real fruit of such a meeting of national minds, which emerged more elastic and better informed, if of the same opinion still. Indeed the chief business of the P. E. N. Clubs, which is to provide a free forum for international literary ideas, was crystallized by a resolution brought forward by J. B. Priestley and unanimously adopted, the gist of which was that our concern was not with politics but with art that lies behind and beyond politics, and demands of governments only the right to freedom of expression for its own affairs. In this setting aside of "ideology" as the chief concern of literature, the P. E. N. Congress sharply differentiated itself from the "Left-Wing Congresses" in Paris, New York, and the one now being prepared for at Valencia or under the guns at Madrid.

So much for principle. And it may be said that in merely affirming the validity of what George Moore used to call pure literature, the P. E. N. Clubs have rendered service to an obsessed world. But these delegates were very human, and by no means immune to current controversy. No sooner had Mr. Priestley's resolution been adopted, than a series of motions were introduced which contradicted it. The Jewish exiles wished the German government condemned and the Spaniards and Catalonians desired that the Spanish legal government should be upheld. An Argentine, Ricardo Suenz-Hayes, of strong anti-communist opinions, attacked, and for an hour the floor was in disorder with the tense emotions which are so close to the surface in Europe today suddenly let loose.

In the swirl of controversy one test case dominated, the death of Federico Garcia Lorca, the Spanish popular poet, a young and much beloved man, of great achievement, and still greater promise, who had taken no part of any kind in politics by act, word, or pen. Nevertheless he was a poet read by the masses, and, apparently for that reason, was seized and shot by a group of Insurgent officers in Granada. The Congress refused to allow his name to go unrecorded because of the atrocities by both sides in the Spanish conflict. They refused also to couple his death with support of the Spanish republic. They chose, after long discussion, and with the final concurrence of all factions, to cite this instance as one example of the unpardonable and irretrievable results of barbarism let loose, to be brought to the attention of the civilized world, and both sides of the Civil War on the Peninsula. They took like action in the case of the Nobel prize awarded to Carl von Ossietzky, choosing rather to appeal to the German government in its own self-interest to forego interference with the rewards of intellectual distinction, than to abuse a political system which they were powerless to change. As H. G. Wells said at the Barcelona Congress in 1935, the power of the writer today was unprecedented, so long as he kept to the tools of persuasion, and resisted the temptation to use threats of a violence which was not his métier.

Among incidental business an interesting statement was made by James Joyce as to the decision of the Supreme Court of the State of New York in the "Ulysses" case, a decision, which, as he wished Europeans to understand, definitely established a "natural right" of an author in his own works, even if those works should be forbidden publication in the United States. In the "Ulysses" case, Joyce's power to sue unauthorized publishers of his book was upheld, even though at the time when "Ulysses" was pirated, he could secure no copyright because of a ban upon its legal publication. And finally, the P. E. N. Clubs were invited jointly by Grover Whalen, President of the New York World's Fair of 1939, and the New York P. E. N. Club, to hold a World's Congress of writers in 1939 under the sponsorship of the World's Fair.

Mr. Canby attended the Fifteenth International Congress of the P. E. N. Clubs as American delegate.

An illuminating study of Shelley's intellectual and spiritual growth

SHELLEY'S RELIGION

By ELLSWORTH BARNARD

"Mr. Barnard has been kindled by the Promethean fire."—Douglas Bush in *Saturday Review*. "He is to belong to the company of the best American critics."—James Gray. $3.50

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, Minneapolis

The Soldiers of a Romantic Period

A HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE 16th CENTURY. By Sir Charles Oman. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1937. $6.

Reviewed by R. Ernest Dupuy, Major, F. A.

MERCENARIES and patriots, captains and kings and cardinals, military and political intriguers, march through these pages with rattle of saber and clatter of hoof. Swiss pikemen, German reiter and landsknechte, Italian condittori, hard-bitten regular infantry of old Spain—all the widely diversified professional and amateur soldiers of one of Europe's most romantic periods stalk the board, as well as the militant hordes of the Ottoman Turk.

A number of pertinent facts emerge from the kaleidoscopic sequence of armed encounters packed into the book: rebirth of the immutable principles of war lost in the artificial, dancing-master, mincing tactical fallacies of the 15th century; the quite evident lack of appreciation of military and economic objectives in which lies the art of strategy; the pendulum swing of firepower—small-arms and artillery coming into their own—versus shock action; and, paradoxically enough, the influence of the military engineer who was bringing the art of fortification to scientific heights, while the average general still lacked in a broad sense ability to grasp the necessity for terrain appreciation.

Pedro Navarro's "tanks," employed at Ravenna (1512), against Gaston de Foix's French troops, provide an example that there is "nothing new under the sun"—two-wheeled carts, equipped with projecting spears and scythe-like blades, with several heavy arquebuses above them which could be discharged like machine-guns. All these things Sir Charles brings out entertainingly. In addition he correlates with the purely military action what he describes as "the military psy-

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chology of the period," without which the student of past wars cannot properly draw conclusions.

Of mercenaries the author has much to say, which may be summed up in his own words:—" 'Business was Business' in the sixteenth century no less than in the twentieth!" So, it seems, many a leader found, whose hirelings struck for extra pay or back pay or even haggled on the eve of battle for a special bonus!

A possible stumbling block at first to the student of military history is the fact that Sir Charles scores Machiavelli for identical observations about the limitations of cavalry which Colonel G. T. Denison in his "History of Cavalry" also quotes as evidence of the wily Italian's "correct ideas upon the art of war!" In truth, however, both giants of military historical research are correct, for they use the same quotation to support two different angles of approach towards the same end, the sluggish degeneracy of an over-armored cavalry which had lost shocking power and lacked effective fire power. And cavalry, if you please, Sir Charles, is still cavalry today—whether it be horsed or mechanized.

All in all this is a grand book, whether for research or for entertainment. With the present-day trend to the period historical romance, "A History of the Art of War in the 16th Century" furnishes background for a thousand thrilling plots of derring-do. And one must bow to the eminent historian who has so completely digested and presented in one volume the causes, actions, and effects of a century of warfare.

Maryland Colonists

CAPTAINS AND MARINERS OF EARLY MARYLAND. By Raphael Semmes. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1937. $5.

Reviewed by HULBERT FOOTNER

THIS is a scholarly work without being in the least forbidding. It is far too entertaining to be relegated to the reference shelves. The marine flavor of the title is slightly misleading, because the "Captains" of the narrative are not the captains of ships, but the leaders of the colonists generally. Actually there is little about mariners; the story is mainly of the settlers and Indians of the seventeenth century. For the most part Mr. Semmes allows them to tell it in the quaint idiom of the day with their own adventurous spelling. He is the most self-effacing of authors. It has obviously been a long labor of love for him to search the archives of America and England for every scrap of original testimony on the times. Consequently the reader is enabled to enter into the very lives of the colonists; to trade with them, journey with them, fight with them; witness their endless attempts to pull wool over each other's eyes.

Mr. Semmes's story of the relations between the colonists and the Indians is a lamentable one. The first settlers were hospitably welcomed by the Indians; nevertheless the colonists came to despite them, gradually overbore them, and drove them off their lands.

Words and Logic

THE LOGICAL SYNTAX OF LANGUAGE. By Rudolf Carnap. Translated from the German by Amethe Smeaton. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1937. $7.50.

Reviewed by MILTON KARL MUNITZ

AMONG the current winds of doctrine in the philosophical world, the one variously known as logical positivism or scientific empiricism, has assumed significant proportions in the very recent past and promises to become increasingly effective as time goes on. Like its historic forbears, empiricism and positivism, it is primarily a movement of criticism, although like these other movements, it presents certain constructive theses as well. Armed with a criterion of meaning that insists on the empirical verifiability of any presumably significant assertion, it is, as criticism, directed to the eradication of metaphysics from the field of legitimate philosophic inquiry. There are metaphysical statements which presume to inform us of the traits of some reality entirely beyond any possible experience, such as God, a realm of transcendent values, Absolute Experience and the like. And on the basis of the above criterion such statements are entirely meaningless and not, therefore, even possibly true or false.

What then, we may ask, is left for philosophy? Here the constructive thesis begins to appear. Since science is preëminently the activity wherein empirically verifiable assertions are made, philosophy, if it is to retain any useful intellectual function, must recognize its proper role as consisting entirely of the logical analysis of the assertions of science. In this volume, and in a less technical, smaller one, "Philosophy and Logical Syntax," Professor Carnap shows such analysis to consist in the logical syntax of the language of science. By this is meant the system of the formal properties and rules governing the formation of sentences in that language and the transformation or "deduction" of one expression from another. In a fairly technical and logically rigorous manner the author contributes an exact syntactical method or instrument for working out the problems of the logic of science as thus conceived. A final section in the volume dealing with the relations between philosophy and syntax, sums up the main thesis of the work and presents a program for constructive philosophic activity.

That an approach to the problems of formal logic via considerations of general syntax is extremely fruitful, this work makes abundantly clear. It likewise cannot be doubted that an adoption of the general critical theses of logical positivism will inevitably involve much discomfiture to speculative philosophies that have been elaborated in the grand manner and without regard to the special findings of the sciences. But instead of identifying philosophy wholly with formal logic, as the author insists, would it not be in greater accordance with usage and history to require the extension of the same method of empirical and logical analysis to at least two types of inquiry that have been traditionally associated with the spirit of philosophy?

We refer first, to a critical examination of the empirically discoverable generic traits of natural existence, and second, to the ethical concern with the intrinsic goods or values of experience. Philosophy, a union of logical technique and comprehensive vision, will then retain its ancient privilege of surveying and estimating the natural conditions and ideal goals of human existence.

Interpreting "Macbeth"

THE THANE OF CAWDOR. A Detective Study of Macbeth. By David Baird. New York: Oxford University Press. 1937. $2.

THE murder of Duncan and that of Banquo are not among the unexplained mysteries. Shakespeare has long ago divulged both the motives and the methods and Mr. Baird does not dispute the poet's analysis of the crimes. But, by assuming that the Doctor of Physic (who in the play appears in only two brief scenes of Act V) was attending Lady Macbeth from the start, and was of an inquiring disposition, the author of this clever book is able to bring various circumstances into sharper focus.

On two sides Mr. Baird's Doctor offers information that will assist students of the play. He enters fully into the constitutional questions affecting succession to the crown under the Gaelic law of tanistry, and produces a genealogical table which, though it diverges from Shakespeare's authority (Holinshed), may be correct. And he gives us a very precise idea, illustrated by drawings, of the structure of Macbeth's castle and the disposition of the guests on the night of Duncan's misadventure. Obviously, the Doctor knows more about these matters than Shakespeare did, but his reconstructions are plausible and sometimes help us neatly over dark places in the dramatic plot.

THE THIRD REICH
By HENRI LICHTENBERGER
Translated and Edited by
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$3.00
SECOND PRINTING
NOWHERE ELSE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAN SUCH AN ACCURATE, COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS BE FOUND
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The New Books

Anthropology

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF NORTH AMERICAN TRIBES, Essays in Social Organization, Law, and Religion. Edited by Fred Eggan, with an introduction by Robert Redfield. University of Chicago Press. 1937. $3.

Upon the occasion of Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's departure from the University of Chicago to occupy the chair of social anthropology at Oxford, a group of his disciples has prepared a notable contribution to social anthropology in his honor. The articles included in "Social Anthropology of North American Tribes" are written by men who are not merely his pupils, but mature scientists who, in the course of their active practice, have developed their own points of view, upon a base of his teachings of "function" and "science."

Adequate discussion of the papers would have to be technical and lengthy. Suffice it to say that they do not merely analyze the social set-ups of specific tribes, but in almost every case develop these analyses to illustrate broad concepts and theories of real interest. As praiseworthy examples, with no intention of slighting thereby the other contributions, one may mention Sol Tax's delightfully clear and non-technical opening remarks on the terms "history," "science," and "explanation" as used in anthropology, and Fred Eggan's clear, readable study of the Cheyenne and Arapaho. The other contributors are William H. Gilbert, Jr., J. Gilbert McAllister, Philleo Nash, Morris E. Opler, and John H. Provinse.

O. La F.

Biography

A COLLEGE PROFESSOR OF THE RENAISSANCE. LUCIO MARINEO SICULO AMONG THE SPANISH HUMANISTS. By Caro Lynn. University of Chicago Press. 1937. $3.

The fifteenth century did not open in Spain with that grand parade of learning and culture which characterized the same period in Italy. The peninsula was governmentally and economically too chaotic. Continuous wars gave its people time to consider only their physical safety. The Moorish civilization in the South alone had any claim to elegance. But, with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the uniting of the powers of Aragon and Castile, life grew more settled. The Moors were finally expelled from Granada, and Christian Spain began to have both the leisure and the wealth to devote itself to the arts. The new learning crept in from Italy; the universities were permeated by the spirit of humanism; the aristocrats, led by the king and queen, took to their hearts the graces of polite letters.

Among the begettors of this cultural awakening was a Sicilian, Lucio Marineo, who had absorbed at Catania, Palermo, and Rome the enthusiasm of the classical revival. Brought to Spain in 1484, he soon became professor of poetry and rhetoric at Salamanca, from which eminence his influence and his fame spread throughout the nation. His wide learning, his gentle manners, and his graceful skill at eulogy gave him popularity in many circles and won for him the friendship even of the king and queen. The generosity of his teaching and the tactful graciousness of his writing did much to create the great period of Spanish culture which flowered in the sixteenth century, the beginnings of which he himself lived to see.

Miss Lynn has presented in this book not only a complete and highly satisfactory biography of Marineo, but also a detailed study of Spanish humanism. Her research has been thorough and loving, and she has had the talent to build up out of her gleanings a book which is readable and rewarding.

C. D. A.

MAJOR NOAH. By Isaac Goldberg. Knopf. 1937. $3.

Major Mordecai Manuel Noah—Heinrich Heine joked about him, Poe analyzed his character through his handwriting and commended his playwrighting, Greeley rebuked him for his attitude toward Negroes, Howell's honeymooners sighed over him in "Their Wedding Journey," Zangwill included him in "They That Walk in Darkness," Maurice Schwartz in 1927 produced a comedy about him in Yiddish. In American legend he was fair to become a tragic buffoon. Mr. Goldberg has made Noah's picturesque personality glow again for us.

M. M. Noah was born in Philadelphia in 1785 of Jewish parents justly proud of their ancestors. Early he apprenticed himself as a gilder and carver, read at the Old Franklin Library, became an enthusiastic Jeffersonian republican, attended the theatres, in 1808 wrote a play. He moved to Charleston, wrote newspaper articles signed "Muly Malak," screeched effectively as a War-hawk, and was rewarded by Madison with the consulship at Tunis where he arrived after an inadvertent grand tour.

Noah moved to New York City where his uncle Nephtali Phillips, a power in politics, made him editor of the *National Advocate*. He won political power with his pen and maintained it until his death in 1851. His utopian scheme to found Zion on Grand Island near Buffalo is characteristically theatrical and shrouded with real estate speculation. Here Mr. Goldberg would have done well to remark that this period in New York State also bred the dreams of Joseph Smith and the calculations of William Miller. He has, however, done well in pointing out to Jews that if they cannot forget the charlatan of Ararat, they can be proud as Jews of this pioneer Zionist and as Americans of this dynamic though errant creature.

D. B.

Fiction

SUNSET AT NOON. By Ruth Feiner. Lippincott. 1937. $2.50.

Her outlook on life affected first by the suicide of her ineffective father, then by her position as penniless dependent on a rich uncle, Stanzi grew up an obstinate little prig. Consciousness of being very moderately good-looking only increased

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE PEACOCK FEATHER MURDERS *Carter Dickson* (Morrow: $2.)	Two different murders in practically sealed rooms with fantastic trappings, and police politely invited, arouse Sir H. Merivale from lethargy.	First-rate puzzler, with oh-so-simple (once you know it) solution —carefully annotated, with lively talk and interesting people.	Dickson *de luxe*
THE MAN WHO WAS MURDERED TWICE *R. H. Leitfred* (Furman: $2.)	Playboy filched of fortune by crooked financial adviser. Simon Crole, hired to regain gold, finds murder rampant.	Copious killings on California coast with Eastern thugs supplying some of the more murderous moments. Much action—no mystery.	Gunplay
DEATH OF A GOLFER *Anthony Wynne* (Lippincott: $2.)	British ship-builder strangely stabbed on links. Immediate bystanders suspected but Dr. Hailey clears them and produces proper killer.	Much beating around bush about deadly golf clubs (*cf.* N. Wolfe) but conclusion is almost farthest-fetched on record.	Hailey-*atque vale*
TENANT FOR DEATH *Cyril Hare* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Murder of crooked financier and complete evaporation of man last seen with him effectively unriddled by lunch-loving Insp. Mellett.	Agreeable and meticulously worked out tale on conventional British lines with more humor than found in most Scotland Yard exploits.	Good

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her determination to become famous as a writer.

Refusing to let any one share her life with her, but constantly imposed upon by trifling souls who subtly flattered her egoism, Stanzi worked and struggled and hoped. She was at her heart a domestic creature, one by nature fitted to be a good, intelligent wife and mother. Her troublesome youth blinded her to her own proper activity, and success opened her eyes. Probably a good many warped souls misunderstand themselves, and strive to be what they should not be.

They, however, do not always succeed, much less succeed as heroines of as glittering a melodrama as "Sunset at Noon." For, in its sprightly progress from paternal suicide, through rape and bastardy and devotion to feminism that brought in the shekels, to the big bang into the tree that did not end fatally, "Sunset at Noon" is melodrama. As such it is good reading. The conversations are bright and rapid; the events move quickly; Stanzi storms her nervous way through fascinating situations. It is good reading.

But as a study of a warped character; as an account of a lost personality finding itself; as a story of human beings facing the problems of existence, "Sunset at Noon" is too glib, too easy. Not because it is melodrama, but because it isn't a great deal more.

S. N.

MEXICAN GALLOP. By Gregory Mason and Richard Carroll. Green Circle. 1937. $2.50.

George Hadley left Yonkers, an unsatisfactory wife, and an equally unsatisfactory job to take a vacation in El Paso. But when he strolled across the border to Juarez he met Popo, a *soldera* who had been won the night before in a crap game by the bandit Torribio Vasco, a character stemming directly from Pancho Villa. When Popo flirted with Hadley, Vasco started to shoot, and Popo and Hadley fled to the desert. How they joined forces with Vasco and how Popo's Mexican temperament eventually reacted on Hadley is the story which Gregory Mason and Richard Carroll have to tell. Mr. Mason, who is an authority on Mexico and who contributed a number of important Mexican articles to *The Outlook* when he served in Mexico under Pershing, has supplied the material on Vasco's exploits, and Mr. Carroll, story editor of Fox Films, has developed the character of Popo, "half-wild child of the mountains."

This action novel smacks more of Hollywood than of *The Outlook,* and was undoubtedly written with the screen version sharply in focus.

V. B. C.

HIGHLAND RIVER. By Neil M. Gunn. Lippincott. 1937. $2.50.

Mr. Gunn, we are told, is one of a group of writers who desire to found a truly national Scottish literature, not dependent upon the English tradition. If "Highland River" is a fair sample, then this movement away from England is headed backwards towards a stilted literariness destructive to vigor. Here is a book which gets off to a magnificent start with a bare-handed combat between a small boy and a thirty-pound salmon, a splendid piece of writing which sends the reader eagerly into the story. The story then proceeds to die on him.

Unwilling or unable to write a simple narrative from the interior point of view of his main character, the writer constantly leaps forward to the matured man theoretically existing in the present day, with a most objectionable present tense—"And here the grown-up Kenn pauses . . .", to give that man's backward reflections on the events and states being described, mixed in with purely literary essays on almost everything, disguised as thoughts. The old-fashioned, external writing combines with this device to destroy narrative and forestall any real acquaintance between the reader and the main character.

These faults destroy the value of a real gift for narrative and descriptive writing. Scenes of poaching, off-shore fishing, and the war, clear-cut, sensitive, memorable, make the reader mourn for the lost possibilities of the book.

O. La F.

History

THE GREAT GOLD REEF. By Adèle Lezard. Bobbs-Merrill. 1937. $3.

This readable book, subtitled "A Romantic History of the Rand Goldfields," is a strange mixture of anecdote, fact, and character sketch, and of personal and borrowed opinion. There are occasional bits of really good writing, of real power of description and of characterization. In one section, at least, the author seems to be her real self entirely free of all the borrowings and influence which beset her, though even here one is moved to regret that she has already used the same material in the overlabored impressionism of the Prologue.

The claim of the book to romance rests largely on the reminiscences of others regarding the finding of gold and the early development of its sources. These reminiscences have a certain sporadic interest in themselves and in what they reveal of their narrator, but as far as their historical value is concerned it must be remembered that they have been retold to eager listeners for upwards of fifty years, that they have suffered many accretions, and that they can be easily matched with other versions by other narrators. More to be deplored than anything else in their retelling is the inclusion of bitterness, ridicule, and sarcasm toward the Dutch and especially toward Oom Paul Kruger.

The account of the development of the Boer War is a thorough, careful, and fine piece of work. Otherwise the history in the book is faulty and careless. Miss Lezard's entire treatment of the natives —a question that requires a life-time's study—follows the usual superficial and sentimental lines of the passing visitor. Her obsession that money—especially gold—is entirely evil is much overworked, seemingly because the word, *gold,* makes such an effective climax to her periods. But the final failure of the book to be a History of the Great Gold Reef lies in its failure to give a picture of Johannesburg as anything more (save for its commercial offerings) than a Bret Harte kind of mining town.

F. S.

Miscellaneous

STRICTLY FROM HUNGER. By S. J. Perelman. Random House. 1937. $2.

Few people would question Robert Benchley's position as the funniest man writing today. He would be the last to hold himself up as an authority on humor, but when he yields his own place in the field of humorous writing to another, it is important. If Benchley is anything (which we will assume for the sake of argument), he is honest. Therefore his tribute to S. J. Perelman deserves serious consideration.

Benchley alleges that he has been forced out of the competitive field of humorous literature by Perelman and is now on "movie relief." This statement, however graceful, is not entirely true. Benchley is good for another year of competition. Nevertheless the fact remains that Perelman is easily the second funniest man writing today. Perelman has been writing funny pieces for the magazines for ten years, unobtrusive little pieces, but all filled to the brim with a mad, uproarious humor. The best of these pieces are now collected. In his introduction to Perelman's book, Benchley writes:

> It was just a matter of time before Perelman took over the dementia praecox field and drove us all to writing economics for the Commentator. Any further attempt to garble thought-processes sounded like imitation-Perelman. He did to our weak little efforts at "crazy-stuff" what Benny Goodman has done to middle-period jazz. He swung it. To use a swing phrase, he took it "out of the world." And there he remains all by himself.

It seemed to take a long time but Perelman finally got around to writing for the Marx brothers. It was his logical place in the scheme of things. Nobody except that punchdrunk trio could even hope to do justice to Perelman's gilded insanity. His brain is a cavity of wild non-sequiturs. His ear is faultless for the bombast and hyperbolas of the language. He is a master parodist of the obvious. He can take a trade publication, any trade publication, or a weather report, and make it glitter with laughter. His imagination is out of all control. Yet behind the incoherent babbling of his prose the barb of satire is at work. It would seem that whenever he sits down to write (he does most of his work on his feet) a wild light settles in his eyes and a spasm seizes the hand which moves the pen. His one-act

VACANCY

WANTED—

TENANT for DEATH

by Cyril Hare. Introduces a new figure in detective fiction, Inspector Mallett, who is faced with a clueless mystery in which the murderer apparently never existed. $2. Dodd, Mead. *Inquire at any bookseller.*

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drama entitled "Waiting for Santy" is easily comparable to the work of that earlier dramatist, Ring Lardner, whose "I Gaspiri, or The Upholsterers" has been performed in every language extant. There is not much point in going on without quoting the whole book. Buy it and go mad. R. S.

THE STREETS OF MEXICO. By Luis González Obregón. San Francisco: George Fields. 1937. $3.

It was a happy idea to translate into very readable English this blend of history and legend. González Obregón is in his seventy-second year; after years of service to the National Archives he is a professor emeritus of the Division of Historical Investigation. These forty-one tales, engagingly illustrated by Ethel E. Pletsch, make excellent collateral reading in Mexican history. They have a certain grandfatherly tenderness, a quiet humor, a touch of the macabre, and, best of all, an ease of narration. In these pages the conquistadores and the conquered live again, not as historical mummies, but as creatures recaptured amid the dailiness of their tasks, triumphs, and defeats. Those who have read "El Indio" will find interest in such accounts as "The Plaza of the Volador," with its less fictional (though not quite so effective) report of a strangely dangerous popular custom. It would be pleasant to have Blanche Collet Wagner turn her translative attention to such a classic as Ricardo Palma's "Tradiciones peruanas," in which Peruvian history and legend find an even more successful and fascinating retelling. Certainly "The Streets of Mexico" makes a welcome addition to the literature of modern and contemporary Mexico that has at last begun to flow Northward.

I. G.

THE END OF DEMOCRACY. By Ralph Adams Cram. Marshall Jones. 1937. $3.

From an architect turned political philosopher one would expect, first, harmony of form; second, soaring imagination. As to imagination, not to say phantasy, there is plenty in Mr. Cram's book; of form very little. On the contrary it is decidedly scrappy, being largely a collection of occasional articles brought together to make up a volume. The author expresses his numerous likes and still more numerous dislikes in higgledy-piggledy fashion, always, however, with great vigor. Among other things he likes high democracy (medieval), "strong men of high and fine character," legislative budgets, the corporative state, the founding fathers, and the Constitution, excepting Amendments XIII to XX. He dislikes low democracy (the contemporary form), "inferior or bad men," universal suffrage, political parties, politicians, proletarian demagogues, prohibition, the Hauptmann trial, the Scopes trial, the second Ku Klux Klan, Townsend, Huey Long, and Father Divine. It is, however, distinctly to Mr. Cram's credit that, abnormally impressed as he is with the sins of modern democracy, he is nevertheless keenly conscious of the sins of contemporary dictatorships. So clear are the latter to him that one queries his title; according to the author's own showing instead of "the end of democracy" may not history's verdict be "the dog it was that died"? On the imaginative side numerous innovations are proposed, the most striking being the transformation of the United States into a monarchical republic under a ruler chosen for life by restricted suffrage. Mr. Cram even works out the proper title for this dignitary, viz., "His Highness, the Regent of the Republic of the United States." R. C. B.

Brief Mention

Among books to be noted are two very useful literary compilations. The first is an edition of *Scottish Poetry. From Barbour to James VI,* edited by M. M. Gray (Dutton). Here is a good anthology of that extraordinarily vigorous North English verse which came to its prime in Scotland after the English school of Chaucer and his contemporaries had faded into conventionalism and routine rhyming. Those who have not made acquaintance with Robert Henryson, one of the very best medieval poets, may do so in this book, assisted by their knowledge of Burns, and a glossary. The other is *A Handbook of Latin Literature. From the Earliest Times to the Death of St. Augustine,* by H. J. Rose (Dutton, $6). This is a companion to the same author's *A Handbook of Greek Literature.* It is a historical and critical survey intended as a manual for readers of either the Latin text or translations. * * * Among miscellaneous books is a life of the inventor of the hard surfaced road, John Loudon McAdam, entitled *The Colossus of Roads,* by Roy Devereux (Oxford University Press, $3). * * * Also *A Key to Precious Stones,* by L. J. Spencer (Lee Furman), which is a good companion book to the manual recently published by the same firm, written by Herbert P. Whitlock, *The Story of the Gems.*

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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PHILOSOPHIC BACHELOR, in late thirties, desires correspondence with thoughtful woman of same age or younger. Interested in literature, psychology, tennis, gardening. Box 152-C.

WANTED: California shack, bit of land: $500. Box 154-C.

LADY with interests philological, psychological, philosophical, sociological seeks stimulating correspondence with like minded fortyish gentleman. Box 156-C.

GENTLEMAN, sixtyish, desires week-end in country where there are congenial people. Must be reasonable and accessible from New York as have no car. References exchanged. Gentile. Box 157-C.

YOUNG MAN, 24; M.A. University of California; Certificat d'Etudes françaises Université de Lyon; two years teaching experience including year at French Normal School; qualified to teach French literature and conversation, Spanish, Oral English; seeks position in University or elsewhere. Box 158-C.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 28, and still in love with life, wishes to correspond with someone equally idealistic. Box 159-C.

YOUNG NEW YORKER, whose pet hobby is putting thoughts to paper seeks correspondence with Miss, similarly inclined. Box 160-C.

WANTED—young struggling artist to illustrate highly imaginative children's stories. Box 161-C.

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A WORLD WAR OFFICER in his early 40's now writing his memoirs, would exchange correspondence with lady of literary inclinations. Box 155-C.

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Double-Crostics: No. 175

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

■	■	■	1-P	2-F	3-Y	4-R	5-S	6-E	7-M	■	8-R	9-B	10-I	11-W	12-Q	13-F
■	14-B	15-A	16-D	■	17-V	18-I	■	19-G	20-H	21-L	22-E	23-K	24-X	25-N	26-U	27-S
28-D	■	29-W	30-X	31-Q	32-M	33-L	34-R	35-H	36-S	37-B	38-O	■	39-C	40-B	41-A	■
42-Y	43-W	44-F	45-N	46-K	47-O	48-L	49-U	50-D	51-B	52-C	■	53-X	54-U	55-S	56-Y	57-Q
58-K	■	59-W	60-N	61-F	62-D	63-A	■	64-K	65-R	66-A	67-N	68-M	69-I	■	70-A	■
71-C	72-E	73-B	74-L	■	75-H	76-C	77-I	78-V	■	79-N	80-P	81-H	82-S	83-G	84-Q	85-E
■	86-W	87-R	88-K	89-H	90-I	91-Y	■	92-F	93-N	94-S	95-X	96-J	97-T	98-D	99-Q	■
100-C	101-T	102-F	103-W	104-J	■	105-I	106-F	107-U	108-S	■	109-M	110-Y	111-R	112-I	113-N	■
114-V	115-D	116-I	■	117-U	118-H	119-C	■	120-M	121-Q	122-O	123-P	124-K	125-W	126-L	127-E	128-Y
■	129-K	130-J	131-W	132-X	■	133-Y	134-X	135-T	136-V	137-U	■	138-H	139-Q	140-G	141-C	142-E
■	143-J	144-V	145-B	146-U	■	147-M	148-L	149-O	150-D	151-C	■	152-S	153-X	■	154-P	155-U
156-M	■	157-E	158-X	159-J	160-H	■	161-C	162-D	163-U	■	164-H	165-Y	166-S	167-E	168-J	169-B
170-T	171-K	172-Q	173-C	■	174-D	175-C	■	176-F	177-G	178-A	179-B	180-I	181-Q	182-A	■	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 17 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Gracefully slender.

B. Prime rogue.

C. Growing well, convalescent.

D. Languor.

E. County in which Burns was born.

F. Patron saint of children.

G. Son of Jesse (Bib.).

H. Inventor of the spinning-frame.

I. Pointed.

J. Sad (Fr.).

K. Famous living physicist.

L. English portrait painter (1734-1802).

M. New England seaside resort.

N. Beseeches.

O. British social reformer (1771-1858).

P. Tidy.

Q. Bestowal of patronage on relatives.

R. Degree; measure.

S. City in Northeast Scotland.

T. Clever raven in a Dickens novel.

U. German composer (1895-).

V. Swiss-American composer (1880-).

W. Act of leaving out.

X. Earl in "Henry VI."

Y. Code excluding women from the throne (2 words).

WORDS

A.	182	15	70	178	66	63	41			
B.	14	73	37	40	179	169	51	9	145	
C.	151	119	71	161	52	141	175	100	76	173	39
D.	62	150	162	50	174	98	115	28	16	
E.	127	157	85	142	167	22	6	72		
F.	44	61	92	106	102	176	2	13		
G.	19	177	140	83	57					
H.	35	75	160	164	81	20	138	118	89	
I.	18	77	69	105	180	112	90	116	10	
J.	130	159	168	104	143	96				
K.	64	46	88	129	171	58	124	23		
L.	33	148	21	126	48	74				
M.	7	120	156	147	32	109	68			
N.	93	79	60	113	25	45	67			
O.	122	149	38	47						
P.	154	1	80	123						
Q.	181	84	31	172	12	139	99	121		
R.	8	65	4	87	111	34				
S.	152	36	55	5	82	94	27	108	166	
T.	170	101	135	97						
U.	26	54	49	163	155	146	107	117	137	
V.	114	78	17	136	144					
W.	43	86	29	59	103	131	125	11		
X.	132	24	95	134	30	158	153	53		
Y.	3	165	128	56	42	91	110	133		

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"We have no poet to match her. The old Millay magic is in 'Conversation at Midnight'." — *Lewis Gannett, N. Y. Herald Tribune.*

Conversation at Midnight

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HARPER & BROTHERS

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

AMONG other contents of current periodicals are two interesting articles by publishers. In *The Journal of Adult Education,* Curtice Hitchcock (Reynal & Hitchcock) has a piece called "Are Publishers Important?," saying many things which the Q. Associates would like to see widely disseminated. ☞After making the point that "book publication, though by no means suited for all purposes, is the freest form of expression we have, and the one in which the time-honored principle of freedom of speech is observed better than anywhere else," Mr. Hitchcock asks "why the market is not filled yearly with books of world-shaking importance and why so much trash is published. Quite simply, the answer to the one question is that they are not written, and to the other that publishers, like other business men, feel that they have to make a living, and that they cannot live on the limited number of masterpieces available. . . . I do not believe that any book of first-rate importance, or indeed of the slightest real significance, political, scientific, or artistic, has failed in recent times, or is likely to fail, to secure publication for commercial, moral, legal, or any other reasons." ☞With this last statement Q. is heartily in accord, and knows of no instance to the contrary—although there is a certain amount of popular opinion to the contrary. The unkillable idea that there are masterpieces which do not get published is, we suspect, owing to two causes: first, the existence of a large number of inept and unpublishable MSS by disgruntled authors; second, the *David Harum* case and its many counterparts—the fact that best sellers are often turned down by some publishers before being accepted by other publishers. But the point about *David Harum* and the other best sellers is that they did get published.

☞In the current *Colophon,* B. W. Huebsch writes "Footnotes to a Publisher's Life," some delightful reminiscences of the publishing firm that bore his name before the Viking Press was started. When Huebsch published *Winesburg, Ohio,* he sent a copy to D. H. Lawrence, who wrote back: "I have just received *Winesburg*—lay in bed and read it—gruesome it is—everybody dotty, *non compos* all the lot—good, I think, but somehow hard to take in: like a nightmare one can hardly recall distinctly." ☞We had never heard before the anecdote which Mr. Huebsch tells about Clarence Day during the war: "then living on Riverside Drive, [he] was investigated by secret service men on suspicion of signalling to the German navy (although it had not yet got to the Hudson!) because of his habit of working at different windows and extinguishing and lighting lamps correspondingly." On the subject of publishing, Mr. Huebsch writes: "A publisher of taste and discrimination can assist talent, he cannot create it. . . . The public at large never thinks about publishers: books come into being of themselves. But if a man happens to know a publisher personally he seems to feel that he must tell him his opinion (in detail) of all the books he has read, and in particular of those with his friend's imprint."

☞Commenting on the list of books read by Antioch College students (*Trade Winds,* July 10), and Q.'s comment that "the remarkable feature of this list is the number of plays," Mrs. Wallace Patterson of Evanston writes: "I am not a librarian but I have been a mother and aunt and I believe there is a catch in this interest in the drama. It seems likely to me that these students are required to read a certain number of books of their own choosing per quarter and what book is so short as one volume of a complete play? Aren't your librarians a bit innocent?" ☞Several correspondents have interpreted the Italian inscription quoted in this department June 19: *"Raccuglitori di straccle ferra vacchi non sono permissi."* Catherine E. Sandy of Port Washington says, "It is my impression that some illiterate Italian boatman tried to imply this simple warning: RAGMAN KEEP OUT, by using a mixture of dialect and spelling as he would pronounce the words." ☞Viking is releasing a 16-page pamphlet on Jean Giono, author of *The Song of the World,* free to librarians, reviewers, booksellers, and any readers who are interested. The pamphlet contains a piece on Giono by Henri Fluchère, various critical comments, and a note by the author on his new novel. M. Giono says: "I have tried to make a story of adventure in which there should be nothing 'timely.' The present time disgusts me, even to describe. It is sufficient merely to endure it. I wanted to make a book with new mountains, a new river, a country, forest, snow, and men all new. The most consoling thing is that I have not had to invent anything at all, not even the people."

Advance Notice

"The Personal Names of the Isle of Man," by J. J. Kneen. Announced for fall publication by the Oxford Press.

"The Personal Names of the Isle of Man"
Is a book by J. J. Kneen. It
Treats of the family, tribe, and clan—
But whether it's green or black or tan
I never shall know till I've seen it.

From the Oxford Press there is more or less
For the salesmen who wear white collars:
5⅝ x 8 and a fraction;
288 pp. of action,
Probable price, $4.

Now personal names of the Isle of Manx
Are a terrible dark enigma;
To Mr. Kneen we offer thanks
Who has found a scheme to fill the blanks
As clear as the role in rigma.

We shall read again of a man called Caine,
And syllables sweet as *queen* is;
Of Sulby, Dalby, Colby, Bride—
But one to master and swell with pride?
I'm ready to say that Kneen is.

—DAVID MCCORD.

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